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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MARSHALL).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
December 12, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ROGER W. MARSHALL to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA FOOTBALL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor one of our football teams back home. These are the Ramblers from Erie Cathedral Prep. This is an outstanding football team.

Oftentimes, when we come here, we talk about things and we tend to go around what is going on in our district

and things that we are proud of. I think in things like these types of championships that are won, while it happened last weekend, it is something that every single player will remember for the rest of his life, their parents will remember it, and the members of the community will remember it. So to be able to stand here today to talk about the Ramblers is really an opportunity for me and truly an honor.

This is the second straight Pennsylvania Quad A State Championship. Cathedral Prep beat Imhotep Charter last week by a score of 38-28. This year's championship makes the Ramblers back-to-back Pennsylvania State champions, and it is their fourth State football title overall. Led by Coach Mike Mischler, the Ramblers have now gone 42-2, appearing in the finals each year and racking up 28 consecutive wins over the last three seasons.

Now, achieving back-to-back State titles sets these Ramblers apart even in the storied history of western Pennsylvania high school football, and they deserve every bit of adulation that they have received. They are a great source of pride for not only the city of Erie, but all of northwestern Pennsylvania.

It is also worth mentioning that the Wilmington High School Greyhounds in Lawrence County gave it their all in a loss last week in Pennsylvania's PIAA Class 2A State title game at Hersheypark Stadium.

Now, this was the Greyhounds' third trip to the title game under legendary Coach Terry Verrelli, who announced his retirement after 40 years on the job right after the game. In those 40 years, Coach Verrelli amassed 314 wins, making him only the 15th high school football coach in Pennsylvania's esteemed football history to reach the 300-win plateau. More valuable than any of his victories on the field are the countless victories he helped his young players achieve in their lives off the field.

I think that sometimes we miss the really strong point about competition at the scholastic level or any level. I would tell you for both these teams, this Erie Prep team, for a lot of these young men, this mission started when they were playing little midget football or pee wee football, and it continued all through their lives. The same thing—their parents supporting them as they go along and their communities supporting them as they go along. These guys are always one moment, one thought, and one memory away from being right back on this field in Hershey, Pennsylvania, and winning the State title.

The same with the Greyhounds. When you talk about high school football history, people talk about Texas and they talk about Pennsylvania. But I got to tell you, the Friday Night Lights story started in Pennsylvania, so with all due respect to my friends from Texas, the Keystone State was the first when it came to Friday Night Lights and the great pride it brought to these communities.

The 2017 teams at Cathedral Prep and Wilmington High School in Pennsylvania's Third District, along with the championship-winning Pine-Richland Rams—which is just outside the Third District, and they won the State championship—again, they add to this really storied history of football in western Pennsylvania. More importantly, they add to the local lore and pride that strengthen communities like Erie and New Wilmington, Pennsylvania.

The hard work, perseverance, and hometown pride that allowed each of these teams to reach the championship is a reflection on the communities, the families, and the people who live in these towns.

So, again, I say to the Cathedral Prep Ramblers, to Wilmington High, and to the Pine-Richland Rams: On outstanding, history-making seasons, congratulations. Great job, guys.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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Although I am a Golden Tornado from Butler, Pennsylvania, I am proud to say: Go Ramblers, Go Greyhounds, and Go Rams.

THE GOP TAX PLAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, by now, enough of the harsh reality of the Republican tax plan has been discovered by Americans. That is why most are opposed. They oppose a huge transfer of wealth to those who don't need it from the majority of middle class Americans who do need help.

They are against giving hundreds of billions of dollars to the largest corporations and the richest Americans with increased borrowing on our children and grandchildren. Their proposal would cost about \$2.3 trillion in increased debt and interest.

They are raising taxes on almost 9 million middle-income people with very high medical bills. The Alzheimer's tax is a bad idea and people hate it.

People noticed that the huge permanent tax breaks for businesses and the wealthy—they have got theirs—but the tax relief for middle-income Americans is temporary and will disappear over time.

By 2023, the average American who makes \$30,000 a year or less will see a tax increase. By 2027, all tax brackets under \$75,000 are going to see a tax increase. Because the Republicans will change the way that tax brackets are adjusted for inflation, we are going to see people pulled up into ever higher tax rates—a stealth tax increase. For middle class Americans, their tax relief is a political football while the rich and the powerful are protected.

Of course, there are other strange things that are going to come out on an ongoing basis because of the crazy way this has been put together, and it is still being massaged behind the scenes. For example, we found just last weekend that some professionals who make between \$500,000 and \$650,000 a year are going to pay a marginal tax rate of over 100 percent. For that extra \$100 they make, they are going to pay \$107 in taxes. Absolutely insane.

People are noticing that this proposal is triggering spending cuts for Medicare—\$25 billion scheduled for next year—and Medicaid cuts for the elderly and disabled are on the horizon.

There are more reasons to oppose this proposal than I have time to list here this morning, but perhaps the most fundamental flaw has not been given nearly enough attention. The Republicans would change taxation based on how you make your money, not how much you make.

The very highest taxes will be on the way that 80 percent of Americans make their income. W-2 salary and wages are going to pay the highest rate. It is

going to be collected on each paycheck and very hard to cut corners.

This is going to open a whole new industry when people find that a CPA who works for a corporation making exactly the same money as somebody who is an independent professional doing exactly the same job but pays far more in taxes, people are going to cash in on a whole new industry in terms of how people can change how their income is characterized.

There will be a professional corporation, a passthrough business, a proprietor, partnerships, and closely held corporations. They will all be treated differently based on ownership, the day-to-day level of involvement, and the organizational structure. In short, all the people who employ lobbyists are going to be able to find a way to pay a lower tax rate than people who just get a paycheck for salary and wages.

Since when does reform of the tax system take this perverted form?

In fact, those people who are going to be changing the form to those other structures will be able to deduct, as corporations will, their State and local property taxes, but individuals will not. It is unfair and it is unwise. This massive transfer of wealth to the people who need it the least, financed by our children and grandchildren with higher debt, and creating a different class of taxpayer based not on how much you make but how clever you are to be able to utilize differences that are created by the army of lobbyists who are at work here on Capitol Hill. It should be rejected.

REMEMBERING THE SACRIFICES MADE BY OUR MEN AND WOMEN IN UNIFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to say thanks to our Active Duty military men and women who serve our country and protect our freedoms; and a special thanks to those soldiers from my home State of Kansas, the soldiers from Fort Riley who represent the Big Red One, the First Infantry Division, whose lapel pin I proudly wear today; and to say thanks to the soldiers of Fort Riley and the airmen and -women at McConnell Air Force Base who so proudly serve this country.

As we approach the holiday season, many of us will be surrounded by loved ones. But we must not forget those in uniform who sacrifice time with their families during the holidays for the safety of our Nation.

Keeping our troops in our thoughts is not enough, however. Congress must move past the brinksmanship and procrastination that leave our government funding moving from one continuing resolution to the next. Failure to provide funding for a full fiscal year not only creates self-imposed crises and uncertainties about paychecks, but it

robs our national defense agencies of the ability to plan, to make smart funding decisions, and to ensure our warfighters are being sent to battle with every advantage at their disposal.

Fiscal reductions and budgetary uncertainties have eroded the readiness of our military. Defense Secretary Mattis stated that the sequestration has done more to harm our troops' readiness than any enemy abroad. As threats continue to expand across the globe, it is imperative that our troops have the resources needed to complete their mission successfully and return home safely.

As the holiday season approaches, I want to urge those at home to remember the sacrifices being made by our soldiers to ensure we celebrate the holidays safely. I also urge my colleagues to address these crises by passing a full-year spending bill for the military, to raise the defense spending caps, and to give our troops the raise they deserve. While our troops have performed exceptionally under an uncertain budget and limited resources, it is past time Congress does its part.

PASS A HURRICANE DISASTER SUPPLEMENTAL AND SUPPORT HARVEY VICTIMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise for the thousands of hurricane disaster victims in our district in Houston and Harris County, Texas, along the Texas Gulf Coast, who are suffering this holiday season due to the Federal Government's inaction and Congress' delay in passing an adequate disaster supplemental bill.

People from Texas, Louisiana, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands are all U.S. citizens.

Hurricane Harvey's destruction was beyond anything witnessed in living memory in Texas. The Houston area typically gets 49 inches of rain throughout the year. A record 52 inches of rain fell in Houston and the Texas Gulf Coast, causing catastrophic flooding in our Nation's fourth largest city.

Harvey damaged over 300,000 homes and apartments in the city of Houston alone. Statewide, nearly 600,000 homes have been inspected by FEMA for flood or wind damage. Most tragically, 88 Texans lost their lives in Harvey's wrath.

Texans are a proud and independent people. We take pride in our self-reliance and can-do attitude. This was best seen in the actions of our brave first responders and countless volunteers from all over the country who rescued their neighbors during the worst flooding.

Unfortunately, many Harvey victims, and especially our seniors and low-income families, continue to be in great need and must rely on others for help.

A report released last week by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that African-American Texans, Hispanic Texans, and Texans with lower income were the most likely to have suffered property damage or loss of income due to Harvey.

□ 1015

The same report found that over 50 percent of all Harvey disaster victims in Texas have been denied assistance from the Federal Government or are still waiting for a final answer.

To date, the Federal Government has provided just \$10 million in aid for Harvey victims. Much more Federal aid is needed to rebuild Houston, Harris County, and the Texas Gulf Coast.

After Hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana and Mississippi, Congress responded by passing a series of disaster spending bills that provided \$120 billion to rebuild New Orleans and surrounding areas. The Governor of Texas has requested \$60-plus billion.

Three months after Sandy made landfall, Congress passed a \$50 billion disaster relief bill to help New York and New Jersey rebuild.

Yesterday, I learned the House leadership is planning on delaying the disaster supplemental for Harvey and the other hurricanes that ravaged Florida, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands for another month, until after Christmas and New Year's. These funds are needed now.

December 25, Christmas Day, will mark the 4-month anniversary of Harvey's landfall. Mr. Speaker, the people of Texas deserve better. Today, thousands of Texans in my district and throughout Houston and the Gulf Coast are living in tents, in their cars, and in flooded, moldy houses that are unsafe for our children and the elderly. America can do better than this.

During this season of giving, Congress must act and help these disaster victims in need or Texas will suffer a second man-made disaster by the United States Congress.

CONGRATULATING QUAKER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MARSHALL). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, not only was western Pennsylvania hit by a flurry of snow this past weekend, but by great pride in high school football. This past Saturday, my hometown Quaker Valley High School football team won the State championship trophy in the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association Class 2A division.

With preseason rankings that would merit them as underdogs and a new coach that stepped in just before the start of the season, the Quakers tackled their way into history. They defeated their opponents handily by 17 points.

Mr. Speaker, these State champions are to be commended for their grit and perseverance. It was an excellent game to cap off an outstanding season.

Congratulations to Coach Jerry Veshio, the entire coaching staff, and the players who are excelling in this western Pennsylvania tradition.

CONGRATULATING PINE-RICHLAND HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday, in front of a crowd exceeding 2,000 people at snow-covered Hersheypark Stadium, western Pennsylvania's Pine-Richland Rams charged victoriously into the history books.

With a 41-21 victory, the Rams won the State championship in the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association Class 6A division. Indeed, it was an unforgettable win that cemented their exceptional State championship season.

Congratulations to Coach Eric Kasperowicz, the entire coaching staff, and the players for excelling in this great western Pennsylvania tradition.

Well done, Rams. Your dedication and hard work has made Pine-Richland High School and all of western Pennsylvania proud.

RESPECT THE HOME RULE ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, 44 years ago this month, Congress passed the District of Columbia Home Rule Act. A Republican President signed it. A Democratic Congress, together with the Republican President, freed the Nation's Capital from government by three unelected commissioners.

The irony is that the self-government the District of Columbia enjoys today is a virtual replica of what a Republican Congress and a Republican President granted to the District of Columbia right after the Civil War. It granted the Home Rule Act and, of course, a Delegate to Congress.

But, with Reconstruction and Democratic control, Democrats took back what Republicans had granted and, once again, Democrats denied the District of Columbia self-government.

Then, 44 years ago, with bipartisan support, after 100 years of struggle, the District of Columbia finally won what we call home rule.

My colleagues should respect their own history. It was Richard Nixon who signed the Home Rule Act, acting on the most revered, as far as we are told, Republican principles of local control, that local residents should always have a democratically elected local government controlled entirely by their government. The District has become one of the most successful jurisdictions in the United States since home rule, with a \$14 billion budget.

Before and after home rule however, District of Columbia residents have always paid Federal income taxes.

Today, D.C. residents rank number one—that is first—per capita in taxes paid to support the government of the United States.

In signing the bill for the Home Rule Act, President Nixon wrote: "One of the major goals of this administration is to place responsibility for local functions under local control and to provide local governments with the authority and resources they need to serve their communities effectively."

Since Congress granted the Home Rule Act, it has shown no interest in governing the District of Columbia, but it requires the D.C. budget to actually be passed again here, by Congress, for the sole purpose of seeking to overturn local laws that Members of Congress don't support.

The basis for our federation of States is that each has its own laws and they must be respected, yet there are eight different laws pending here to be overturned by the Congress of the United States.

I believe I will be able to retain most of these laws for the District of Columbia, but why should I have to spend any of my time protecting local laws passed by my local jurisdiction?

They range from trying to get rid of all the District's gun laws; making the District pay for private schools out of local funds; the medical aid in dying law, which six States already have and DC would not be allowed to have, although two Republican leaders have such bills in their States; no budget autonomy law; repeal of the non-discrimination law that the District has based on reproductive choices of family members; no local funds for marijuana commercialization, though that is now done by eight States; and the prohibition on spending for abortions for low-income women. That is done by 17 States.

This is a sampling of what is pending, Mr. Speaker. Congress allows these same laws to exist in their own local jurisdictions.

The way to commemorate self-government for the District of Columbia granted by Congress 44 years ago is for Congress itself to respect the Home Rule Act it passed in 1973.

SHASH JAA NATIONAL MONUMENT AND INDIAN CREEK NATIONAL MONUMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah (Mr. CURTIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CURTIS. Mr. Speaker, as you can see in this picture, Indian Creek, located in southeastern Utah in my congressional district, is home to some of the most beautiful and majestic scenery in the world, but it has also become an epicenter of an ongoing conflict between those whose livelihoods depend on multiple uses of these public lands and groups focused on advocating for limited use of those lands.

Almost exactly 1 year ago, President Obama, over the objections of many

stakeholders, utilized the Antiquities Act to unilaterally designate 1.35 million acres of land as the Bears Ears National Monument. Last week, President Trump came to Utah to help resolve this issue by reauthorizing this monument into two much smaller national monuments, the Indian Creek and the Shash Jaa National Monument.

Although both executive actions have ignited widespread anger and resentment on each side of this issue, I still believe that both sides share many common goals and values and can work together for the benefit of Utah. We can all agree that these important lands must be responsibly managed for future generations to appreciate.

Now that Utah has two, more manageable monuments, the time has come for Congress to act to ensure that these archeological treasures and sacred Tribal lands are protected the right way. I believe the right way to manage these lands is to have input from Utah's Tribal members, local citizens, and government officials.

Additionally, there needs to be a management plan that protects important archeological sites and sacred Tribal land while also maintaining multiple uses of these lands, such as recreation, hunting, and grazing.

Lastly, the legislative process and constitutionally mandated system of checks and balances are the best way to both determine the best management of these lands as well as the creation of any new national parks, monuments, recreation, and conservation areas. That is why I have joined other members of Utah's House delegation to introduce the Shash Jaa National Monument and Indian Creek National Monument Act, which creates the first tribally comanaged monument area. It will safeguard these new monuments by establishing management councils comprised of representatives of local government and Native Americans.

This bill also authorizes law enforcement officials to protect these sacred and significant archeological sites and antiquities from looters, while preserving the multiple use and access to these lands for recreation, grazing, and hunting.

As a Member of Congress, my job is to bring forth solutions that add stability to this region and complement our mutually shared goals. That is the Utah way. It is my hope that, as Congress considers my Shash Jaa National Monument and Indian Creek National Monument bill, we can bring all sides together to manage these important areas in the right way.

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. CURTIS. Mr. Speaker, this Thursday, the Federal Communications Commission is set to vote on their Restoring Internet Freedom proposal, to revisit the FCC's previous open internet order of 2015.

Over the past few weeks, I have received thousands of calls and emails from my constituents expressing their

support for net neutrality and for an open and free internet. I have personally read every single one of these emails, conducted townhall meetings, and listened to the phone calls. Today, I would like to share my views on this critical issue.

Many in this Chamber may not know that Utah is currently experiencing somewhat of a technical startup phenomenon. My district is known as one of the best places in the United States to start a business.

I recognize that the great success that we have been able to achieve in Utah and throughout the U.S. is largely due to the progress and advance of the internet. This is the most important technological advancement of our time, and the internet has become the backbone of our economy.

I believe the internet is successful despite government, not because of government. Because the internet has been open and free, we have seen exciting innovation and progress that was previously unimaginable.

Like so many of my constituents and colleagues in Congress, I support the principles of net neutrality and am opposed to any blocking, throttling, or paid prioritization of the internet. Because I do not favor a burdensome government regulatory framework over the internet, I feel a great burden to assure those in my district that the internet will remain open and free. The way to do this is for Congress to act.

It is more than time that Congress step up and modernize the statutes that control how the internet is regulated. A vast number of my constituents and small businesses are concerned about the future of the internet. They worry that large corporations will win out and deprive them of their ability to be competitive.

As a Congress, we can give them the protection that they need. It has been more than 20 years since Congress last reformed our national telecommunications laws. It is my sincere hope that we will come together in a bipartisan way to update this outdated regulatory framework and to ensure that the internet continues to be fair, open, and free so that it continues to benefit customers and advance and innovate, unhindered by burdensome government regulations. I66F

□ 1030

THERE THEY GO AGAIN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GALLEGO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, there they go again. Donald Trump and PAUL RYAN are dusting off a familiar Republican playbook.

I will break it down for you:

Step one, slash taxes for millionaires and billionaires;

Step two, explode the deficit;

Step three, use rising deficits to justify cuts to Medicare and Medicaid;

Step four, accuse Democrats of being irresponsible for opposing said cuts;

Step five, repeat. Repeat as the rich get richer, repeat as the deficit grows larger, repeat as working families struggle, and repeat as the social safety net disintegrates.

We saw it a decade ago under President Bush, and we are seeing it again right now.

But you don't have to take my word for it, Mr. Speaker. The Republican tax bill will add \$1.5 trillion to our national debt over the next decade, yet PAUL RYAN is already claiming that we need to cut entitlements to get America's finances under control.

Last week, RYAN warned: "We're going to have to get back next year at entitlement reform. . . . Frankly, it's the healthcare entitlements that are the big drivers of our debt . . . that's really where the problem lies."

Not true, Mr. Speaker.

Our problem doesn't lie with life-saving healthcare programs like Medicare and Medicaid. Our problem lies with this monstrosity of a tax bill.

What if we tried a different approach?

What if, instead of slashing Medicare to pay for tax cuts for Trump's cronies, we said no to this scam of a tax bill?

What if we said no to raising taxes on middle class families?

What if we said no to hurting students to help the largest companies in the world?

What if we said no to a tax bill written by high-paid lobbyists for wealthy donors behind closed doors?

What if, just once, the Republican majority actually passed a bill to make life easier for Americans living paycheck to paycheck?

It is a crazy idea, right?

But if Republicans come to their senses and want to work on real tax reform for working Americans, they know where to find us, but I won't hold my breath.

CONGRATULATING ANDREA SANCHEZ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. YOH) for 5 minutes.

Mr. YOH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Ms. Andrea Sanchez—and I am excited about this—from Gainesville, Florida, for winning our district's 2017 Congressional App Challenge. Her app, iVolunteer, solves a problem she saw in her school and helps students log their volunteer hours, as well as incentivizing community service by letting students compete against their peers to see who can log the most hours.

Other submissions we received included an app that teaches students how to code and one designed to give people real-time information in natural disasters.

These apps came from young students who recognized a problem they were facing and employed various

skills and creativity in designing and building their apps.

Because of STEM education, students are not only learning critical technological skills that will serve them in the future, but they are creating the next generation of apps, software programs, and more—possibly, the next IT company.

Supporting STEM education gives our students an opportunity to become leaders in the field that positively impacts America and the world alike.

IMPEACH PRESIDENT TRUMP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, once again, I enjoy the preeminent privilege of standing in the well of the Congress of the United States of America. I do not take lightly the opportunity that the people of this country have afforded me.

Mr. Speaker, the topic that I will address today is not the one that I had in mind when contemplating this moment.

Mr. Speaker, I have been moved by the words of a father—a father who spoke this morning on national television; a father who talked about his daughter and how his daughter had been a victim of bigotry; a father who talked about how his daughter had been spoken of in terms that were untrue; and a father who had been led to believe, he himself, that his daughter could be changed.

He went to various professionals to try to seek help because his daughter was a lesbian, and they discovered that this was who she was, Mr. Speaker. This was not some charade, not some facade, not some disease, this was who she was. This is who God created, Mr. Speaker.

And the saddest part of this story, Mr. Speaker, is that it doesn't have a happy ending. Because of bigotry and the way people have been misled, this daughter took her life.

I literally had tears well up in my eyes as I heard the story. I am saddened by what happened, and I am saddened to know that a person associated with that bigotry may find his way to the Senate of the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, people ask: What harm does it do to allow bigotry to emanate from the highest offices in this country?

There is some of your evidence, Mr. Bigotry, and those who perpetrate it. There is some of your evidence of how it can be harmful.

But there is more evidence.

When you speak ill of people who are exercising their constitutional right to protest, and you call their mothers dogs when you call them SOBs, you are creating harm to society, especially when it emanates from the highest office in the land.

What harm does it cause to society when you associate the majesty and

the dignity of the Presidency with those who would go to Charlottesville screaming “blood and soil,” proclaiming, “Jews will not replace us.” When you associate the majesty and the dignity of the Presidency with these people, you are doing harm to society, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will answer the question that has been posed. It is a question that I think is a fair one and ought to be answered. Here is the answer. You will surmise what the question is by virtue of my giving the answer. The answer is: there will be another vote to impeach this President. There will be another vote because I will not stand by and watch this country, the country I love, be brought into shame and disrepute because of a person who is unfit to hold the office of President.

Mr. Speaker, history will judge us all. For those who find that this is unacceptable and unbearable, I am sorry, but the country is greater than we are. Government of the people, by the people, is greater than we are. Maintaining and saving the Republic is greater than we are, in one sense, but, in another sense, it really is who we are.

I have a tie on that says: We, the people. We, the people, we are the ones who can make a difference. There will be another vote.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it reads like a page out of George Orwell's “1984:” spies, secret courts, and searches of Americans without a warrant. It is clear: Big Brother is watching us.

Most Americans may not be fully aware of what is taking place behind closed doors of government spy agencies, but the reality is our government is spying on ordinary, everyday Americans.

How?

Through an old piece of legislation, originally signed into law by President Carter in 1978, called the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, or FISA.

FISA allows our government to spy on foreign agents, including terrorists, primarily overseas. The government collects all of this information and puts it into a database. If they want to use or search the database, they go to a secret court, and that court issues a secret warrant to search the database.

This court operates behind closed doors and issues those secret warrants to go after—remember—bad guys overseas.

As the subcommittee chairman of terrorism, I have no problem with our government going after terrorists who seek to harm Americans.

What I do have a problem with, Mr. Speaker, is the government uses these databases that they seize and then looks in those databases about Americans and their activities, violating their Fourth Amendment rights because they don't have a warrant to go into these databases to look for Americans. Remember, they are searching for terrorists.

Here is what happens: While seizing the communications of a suspected foreign agent—maybe an al-Qaida terrorist talking to another al-Qaida terrorist—the government, incidentally, picks up communications of American citizens. These communications may not have anything to do with terrorism.

This data is kept. The government puts it in their database, and they say it is legal. This information on Americans was seized based on this secret warrant of foreigners issued by a FISA judge.

Occasionally, the government then decides to go into this database that was inadvertently seized—as they call it—without a Fourth Amendment warrant on Americans, and checks to see how many times an American name, or other identifying information, comes up. If they find something, they use this data on the American citizen.

Now, Mr. Speaker, they still don't have a warrant to search Americans' information, even if it was incidentally collected.

They search this database to see, for example, if Bobby Oglethorpe is committing a crime in the United States, maybe having nothing to do with terrorism. Maybe it is a robbery, maybe it is an IRS fraud, maybe it violates other laws of the United States. But, remember, they are looking for that without a warrant.

They seize the information, and, quite frankly, we don't know how many times they seize this information on Americans.

Our Judiciary Committee has continually asked the intelligence community: How many times have you searched? They refuse to tell us how many searches and seizures there are on Americans in that database.

Very suspicious, isn't it, Mr. Speaker?

According to The Washington Post, 90 percent of the account holders, whose communications were collected, were not targets. The bad guys overseas, they were Americans: 90 percent of them.

Nearly half of the surveillance files contained names, email addresses, and other details that the NSA marked as belonging to American citizens or residents.

So, what information are they getting?

They get communications, texts, and emails.

Without a warrant, remember, secret courts issuing secret warrants, and they don't tell anybody about it.

Under section 702 of the FISA legislation, this warrantless search of Americans is legal. But this, in my opinion, violates the U.S. Constitution.

As a former judge, I am very concerned about the loss of our Fourth Amendment right of privacy in the United States, based on this unconstitutional law. The Fourth Amendment is sacred to this country and to the Founders who drafted it. It is up to Congress to uphold Americans' Fourth Amendment rights.

Despite intense debate in the House Judiciary Committee, I am still concerned the House leadership is planning to reintroduce and reauthorize the FISA legislation and not have these reforms to protect Americans' privacy. A reauthorization of FISA with weak language only seeks to put Americans' privacy at stake and violates the U.S. Constitution.

Any 702 reauthorization should simply require that if you want to look at the data that was incidentally seized on Americans, get a search warrant or stay out of that data; otherwise, it violates the Constitution.

And that is just the way it is.

OPEN ENROLLMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge Americans to sign up for their health insurance by this Friday, at midnight, if they haven't already done so for the 2018 year. This Friday, December 15, is the deadline to sign up for open enrollment for them and for their family.

□ 1045

If you don't do that, you won't have a chance, really, to buy that health insurance next year. If you haven't already bought your health insurance for 2018, to get details about available plans, please visit the website, healthcare.gov, or call 1-800-318-2596—that is healthcare.gov, or 1-800-318-2596. You will actually get to talk to a real person.

In order to get in touch with someone local who can help you sign up for insurance in your own area, you call that same number, 1-800-318-2596, or you can go to the website that is called localhelp.healthcare.gov—localhelp.healthcare.gov.

Health insurance is vital. It can protect us from astronomical cost when a serious accident or illness occurs, because the average cost of a 3-day hospital stay is \$30,000. A broken leg, on average, costs \$7,500. Having a baby, on average, in States like Ohio, costs \$6,000.

Health insurance is your lifeline. It helps protect you and your family from unexpected costs and, frankly, possible bankruptcy, because over two-thirds of people in our country that go bankrupt do so because of health bills they can't pay.

What happens is, if they have a house, they lose the house. It is confiscated to pay the medical bills. They lose their credit rating. It is a terrible thing that happens to people when they get sick, and it is just a roll of the dice on who is going to get cancer, who is going to get appendicitis, who is going to become ill, who is going to be hit in a hit-and-run accident around this country.

Coverage choices are affordable on these exchanges, and, in many cases, financial help is available. During last year's enrollment period, believe it or not, 8 in 10 people qualified for financial help. For most people, that meant they could find insurance premiums for as little as \$100 a month or less.

For example, CareNet, a provider network in Ohio, recently helped to enroll a gentleman who has cancer and was previously uninsured. Can you imagine that? Who can afford these infusions? This man spent an entire year without oncology treatment and certainly needs multiple surgeries now. Because of the Affordable Care Act and through the help of CareNet, he found a plan that costs \$100 a month. He thought he would have to pay much more, but he will now be able to begin treatment at the beginning of 2018. Thank God he got coverage.

Actually, many working people can qualify for Medicaid. For example, a family of four earning \$33,000 in Ohio can get coverage through Medicaid. Please know you can apply for and enroll in Medicaid at any time of the year. Even if you don't have health insurance, you should definitely look into that if you do not have health insurance.

Every American is required to have health insurance through their employer—but a lot of employers don't provide it—through Medicare, Medicaid, or through purchase of plans on the individual marketplace. Health insurance provides you and your family with health security and piece of mind, paying costs when you need medical care.

The marketplace provides access to quality and affordable health coverage, which requires insurers to cover certain benefits such as prescriptions, emergency care, mental healthcare, and preventive services. It is important to highlight that more than 68 million people rely on Medicaid, and 9 million children rely on the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Now, Republicans in Congress have let the children's program lapse. Unfortunately, Federal funding for that program helps over 220,000 children in Ohio, and 73 days ago, the Republican Congress said: Sorry, America's children, we are going to put you on hold for the moment.

Whether that program will be funded or not is all caught up in these end-of-year discussions that are occurring here at a very high level. America's children should be covered with insurance.

The Republican-led Congress has also let Federal funding for community health centers, a resource critical to millions of our families, lapse also since September 30. They best restore that. Why hurt the American people? Why would you do that?

Once again, please visit healthcare.gov or call 1-800-318-2596 to sign up for your health insurance for 2018. Do what is responsible, and do what is lifegiving.

MOUNT NITTANY VINEYARD AND WINERY WINS BEST OF CATEGORY AWARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a great agribusiness, a successful part of our number one industry in Pennsylvania, which is agriculture.

One out of every seven Pennsylvanians owe their job directly or indirectly to agriculture, and today I rise to congratulate one of those agribusinesses, the Mount Nittany Vineyard and Winery, for winning a Best of Category award at this year's Atlantic Seaboard Wine Association competition. Mount Nittany Vineyards and Winery took home one gold, six silver, and two bronze awards in the mid-Atlantic competition.

Located just 6 miles from State College and Penn State University, Mount Nittany Vineyard and Winery is located above the historic village of Linden Hall. It boasts breathtaking views across Penns Valley to the Tussey Mountain range.

Mount Nittany Vineyard and Winery won Best of Category for its 2016 Geisenheim wine. Joe and Betty Carroll founded the winery, and it opened for business in 1990. Mount Nittany Vineyard and Winery now produces 16,000 gallons of wine each year and harvests anywhere from 12 to 15 tons of grapes annually.

It is now owned and managed by Joe and Betty's daughter and son-in-law, Linda and Steve Weaver. Linda and Steve continue to produce award-winning wines, including fruit wines out of locally sourced cherries, apples, blueberries, and raspberries.

Mr. Speaker, proudly, Linda and Steve Weaver will be on Capitol Hill tomorrow for the Atlantic Seaboard Wine Association awards ceremony. I wholeheartedly congratulate the Weavers on this outstanding recognition. I wish them the best as they continue to grow, make, and produce their fine wines in Centre County.

APPLAUDING CONTINE CORPORATION ON OSHA DESIGNATION

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the exceptional achievement of Contine Corporation in Erie, Pennsylvania.

Contine Corporation is a manufacturer of mechanical and

electromechanical assemblies built to customer specifications. In its more than three decades in operation, it has expanded the facility three times, acquired a plastic injection molding business, and developed quality employees and suppliers to serve its customers.

Recently, Contine Corporation received approval from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, or OSHA, as a SHARP participant. SHARP stands for Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program. This is one of the highest honors OSHA awards to a worksite.

Since 1995, OSHA has been recognizing small business worksites that have shown a continuous commitment to improving the safety and health of their workplace through the OSHA Consultation Program. Fewer than 1,600 worksites across the country currently share the honor of SHARP recognition.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Constantine Ellrich, owner of the Contine Corporation; safety manager, Randall Groves; and the entire Contine workforce for its dedication to workforce safety.

Ensuring a safe and healthy working environment protects a business' viability, and, most importantly, it protects American workers.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 53 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

God, Father of us all, we give You thanks for giving us another day. Ever faithful to Your promises, we ask Your presence with Your people, now and forever.

The sun grows dim and the daylight is measured. In the darkness, phantoms loom. The eye cannot discern as the distance fades. Be for us light.

Help the Members of Congress make clear judgments that will propel us into a blessed future. Remove any shadowy cloud so that they might follow the patterns of Your inspirations.

O Lord of the ages, ever faithful to Your promises, be with us throughout these waning days of the session, and may all that is done in the people's House be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's pro-

ceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WESTERMAN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

HONORING GREG ALIA DAY

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to recognize that this Thursday, December 14, is Greg Alia Day: a day to recognize law enforcement and their families for their dedication in promoting the protection of American families.

I appreciate the hard work and devotion of Kassy Alia in recognizing her husband in such a positive way with Greg Alia Day, truly giving back to the community and recognizing his service to the American people.

Greg was a fine young man and also a 7-year veteran of the Forest Acres Police Department. I was fortunate to have the privilege to travel with Greg and Boy Scout Troop 100 of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Columbia to Philmont Scout Ranch at Cimarron, New Mexico. I learned then what a dedicated person he was.

His legacy and courage will live on through the great work of his wife, Kassy; his son, Sal; and his parents, Dr. Richard and Alexis Alia.

To the many law enforcement and families across the country: We thank you for your service, dedication, and sacrifice, which I saw over the weekend with Sheriff Michael Hunt from Aiken, Sheriff Leon Lott from Richland, and Sheriff Jay and Kim Koon from Lexington.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September 11th in the global war on terrorism. God bless the memory and service of Greg Alia.

RECOGNIZING GRAYDON CARTER

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize the career of Hall of Fame Magazine Editor Graydon Carter.

Graydon Carter is one of the great journalists of our time. He retires today after 25 years as the editor at

Vanity Fair. He cofounded and was editor of Spy magazine, as well as the New York Observer. At Vanity Fair, he gave a venue to writers like Michael Lewis; Dominick Dunne; and Christopher Hitchens, one of the great journalists of our time.

Upon Christopher Hitchens' passing, Graydon said he was a wit, a charmer, and a troublemaker; and to those who knew him well, he was a gift from—dare I say it—God.

From his beginnings at Spy magazine and through his days at the New York Observer and Vanity Fair, he pointed out the shortcomings of Donald Trump. He gave him the epithet: short-fingered vulgarian.

For that and much more, Graydon Carter will be remembered as a great journalist, a great human being, a great raconteur, and a great friend.

GUNNERY SERGEANT DALE SIGLER

(Mr. MCKINLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCKINLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Gunnery Sergeant Dale Sigler from Moundsville, West Virginia.

Dale's life has been one of leadership and service to his community and country. At the age of 17, during the height of World War II, he got his parents' permission and enlisted in the United States Navy, even before he had finished high school. He served in the Navy until 1946 before returning home to finish his education. Upon graduation, he then joined the Marines and led an exemplary military career as a gunnery sergeant.

Dale retired after 20 years of military service, but his desire to serve the community didn't stop there. He went on to serve as a chaplain for the local chapters of The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Marine Corps League. He was recently awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award for his dedicated service.

Gunnery Sergeant Sigler, we salute you and offer you our deepest gratitude. You, sir, are truly a great American.

REPUBLICAN TAX SCAM

(Mr. JEFFRIES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, the Republican tax scam will raise taxes on 36 million middle class Americans, undermine Medicare, and explode the deficit. It will saddle our children and grandchildren with more than \$1 trillion in additional debt simply to pay for an unnecessary, un-American, unconscionable tax cut for millionaires, billionaires, special interests, corporations, and big donors.

To justify this reckless Ponzi scheme, the Treasury Department has produced a 1-page analysis.

Really? One page? That is the best you can do?

You are insulting the intelligence of the American people, insulting the intelligence of this Congress, and insulting the intelligence of our Democratic republic.

The American people deserve a better deal.

HONORING THE ALSTON FAMILY OF MENA, ARKANSAS

(Mr. WESTERMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a truly remarkable family from the Fourth Congressional District of Arkansas.

The Alston family from Mena is recently named Arkansas Farm Family of the Year. The Holly Springs Homestead, run by Luke and Deedee Alston, is a diverse farm of Angus cattle, chicken houses, and a large variety of fruits and vegetables grown at its location in Polk County.

Not only is the family—which includes sons Ryan and Drey—active in traditional farming, but the Alstons are also a leader in Arkansas agritourism, with a variety of crops bringing families to the Holly Springs Homestead. Their work supports the Polk County economy and brings pride to their friends and neighbors.

I send my congratulations to the Alston family on this prestigious honor, as well as all the county farm family winners across Arkansas.

REPUBLICAN TAX PLAN

(Mr. HIGGINS of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, the Trump White House and the U.S. Treasury Secretary continue to issue formal reports about the Republican corporate tax cut plan. These reports are devoid of fact or credibility and have been categorically rejected by each and every respectable tax expert.

These tax cuts will pay for themselves and fuel \$2 trillion in economic growth over the next decade.

Not true. Tax cuts have never come close to paying for themselves, not once or ever in human history.

Corporate tax cuts will trickle down to increase annual household income in America by between \$4,000 and \$9,000.

No one believes this or them. For the White House Council of Economic Advisers to say this is official misconduct and a blatant fraud perpetrated against middle America.

Mr. Speaker, this big, corporate tax cut is a massive giveaway to corporate America and a major takeaway from middle America.

CELEBRATING THE CAREER OF MARIA DIAZ

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the career of Maria Diaz, who will be retiring after more than 35 years serving at the Social Security Administration in my hometown of Miami.

My staff and I have had an opportunity to know and work with her over the last 17 years that she has served as a public affairs specialist. Throughout that time, she has been an invaluable resource to us and our constituents.

Maria started working at the Social Security Administration in 1982 in what she thought would be a temporary job, but she quickly grew to love her work and those she had an opportunity to serve. Over the last three decades, with her calm demeanor and ever-present smile, Maria has made a significant impact in the lives of countless individuals in our community.

Mr. Speaker, Maria Diaz is the embodiment of the ideal public servant. She has dedicated her life to faithfully and diligently serving those most in need in South Florida.

On behalf of a grateful community, I wish her the best of luck in the next exciting chapter of her life.

Felicidades, amiga.

NEW YORK STRONG

(Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, yesterday, a terrorist tried to attack the lifeblood of New York City: our subway system. It is another somber reminder that New York City, a beacon of hope and freedom, remains a target for terrorists.

We had the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993, another one on 9/11 in 2001, the Chelsea bombing last year, the truck attack earlier this year, and another bombing yesterday.

In addition, the New York Police Department openly talks about 27 other attempts to harm New Yorkers, which were thwarted. By now, it should be clear that we cannot play politics with Federal funding for local law enforcement and homeland security. The funding for States and cities, especially high-threat areas, must not be delayed, diminished, or cut off.

While we are still learning more about this latest attack, one thing is clear: the terrorist wanted to strike fear into the hearts of every New Yorker, but he failed. New Yorkers will always persevere in the face of diversity. Our trains are running. Our people are back to work.

I wish the three people injured yesterday a swift and speedy recovery. I want to express my gratitude to the

law enforcement of New York City and the heroic response of our first responders. We are all very grateful to them for what they do for us every day.

BEETLE KILL

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, it is amazing that there was 25 percent more tree death this past spring and summer after near record precipitation last winter.

We are seeing the beetle kill and the tree die-off at amazing rates. You can see the forests that are devastated in the West each year. They aren't necessarily all forested areas, but you see what the effects look like in communities on the east side of the State and in the north.

The devastation must end. We must manage our forests. We have, again, the beetle kill. We have trees dying off. There are billions of board feet of trees dying off that are assets of the American people. We should have our forests managed so they are sustainable, healthy, and good for the wildlife.

We need action taken by the USDA and the U.S. Forest Service. We are meeting with those folks to try to get a new direction. Under the previous administration, we got a lot of talk and a lot of smoke. We need action that is going to be positive so that the West doesn't have to burn every year, leaving negative effects to air quality and the economy.

□ 1215

GOP TAX SCAM

(Mrs. BUSTOS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, you have been hearing a lot about this tax plan, but it is really a tax scam.

It is not a mistake that congressional Republicans are going after hardworking middle class families. In fact, it is an intentional attack against them.

Let me explain briefly. They have laid out a simple three-step process. Here they are:

Step one, pass a tax scam that they know will raise taxes on millions of middle class families in order to give tax cuts to corporate special interests and billionaires. That alone will saddle our children with more than \$1 trillion in debt.

Step two, flip out about this new debt.

Step three, then demand cuts to Social Security and Medicare.

For months, congressional Republicans have denied that this is what they are doing.

Well, let me tell you what happened last week. Speaker RYAN said this: "We're going to have to get back next

year at entitlement reform, which is how you tackle the debt and the deficit.”

He says that entitlements are what he is going to go after.

Well, do you know what entitlements are?

Medicare and Social Security, under his definition.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to reject this tax scam. Instead, let's offer a better deal to the American public.

REMEMBERING MAYOR ED LEE

(Ms. LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, today I rise with a very heavy heart upon learning of the passing of a great human being: San Francisco's Mayor Ed Lee.

My thoughts and prayers are with his family—his wife, Anita, and two daughters—and the entire city and county of San Francisco and the bay area.

My condolences are also with Leader PELOSI and Congresswoman JACKIE SPEIER, two San Francisco leaders who loved Ed and will miss him tremendously.

Ed was an unshakable champion for social justice, a tireless public servant, and, personally, a friend. He always put a smile on my face when he considered me as and called me his sister, being two Lees.

He was such a kind and thoughtful person and a truly great leader. Even before he was mayor, Ed was a champion for the people of San Francisco as a community organizer and a civil rights attorney. As the first Asian-American mayor of San Francisco, he broke new ground for the city. As mayor, he fought to expand affordable housing, address the homelessness crisis, and ensure that residents could earn a living wage.

Ed will be missed tremendously. He helped so many people in his life and he touched so many lives. Mayor Lee set the higher standards for mayors and all elected officials as a true public servant. As we grieve, we take comfort in knowing that he has left an inspiring and lasting legacy of uplifting and empowering families. We will always remember his beautiful smile and his passion for making life better for others. May his soul rest in peace.

FISCAL YEAR 2018 REPUBLICAN BUDGET

(Mrs. LAWRENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the Republican spending plans.

Republicans in Congress have passed a tax giveaway to corporations and left behind everyday Americans. Now Republicans are refusing to address constituents' urgent priorities: from children's healthcare to disaster relief, to certainty for DREAMers, and more.

They refuse to bring a clean reauthorization for the Children's Health Insurance Program—CHIP—which serves 9 million children and 370,000 pregnant women. They want to drastically cut other healthcare funding while saying they support CHIP.

Republicans are also planning to cut Medicare and Medicaid. These cuts would be devastating for millions of people who depend on Medicaid for essential health services: children, seniors, low-income individuals, and people with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, this budget will hurt children, women, and all Americans just to pay for a tax giveaway, and it is simply unacceptable.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 12, 2017.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 12, 2017, at 11:23 a.m.:

That the Senate passed S. 447.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

COMMUNITY INSTITUTION MORTGAGE RELIEF ACT OF 2017

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 647, I call up the bill (H.R. 3971) to amend the Truth in Lending Act and the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974 to modify the requirements for community financial institutions with respect to certain rules relating to mortgage loans, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 647, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115-44 is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 3971

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Community Institution Mortgage Relief Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. COMMUNITY FINANCIAL INSTITUTION MORTGAGE RELIEF.

(a) EXEMPTION FROM ESCROW REQUIREMENTS FOR LOANS HELD BY SMALLER CREDITORS.—Section 129D of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1639d) is amended—

(1) by adding at the end the following:

“(k) SAFE HARBOR FOR LOANS HELD BY SMALLER CREDITORS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—A creditor shall not be in violation of subsection (a) with respect to a loan if—

“(A) the creditor has consolidated assets of \$25,000,000,000 or less; and

“(B) the creditor holds the loan on the balance sheet of the creditor for the 3-year period beginning on the date of the origination of the loan.

“(2) EXCEPTION FOR CERTAIN TRANSFERS.—In the case of a creditor that transfers a loan to another person by reason of the bankruptcy or failure of the creditor, the purchase of the creditor, or a supervisory act or recommendation from a State or Federal regulator, the creditor shall be deemed to have complied with the requirement under paragraph (1)(B).”; and

(2) by striking the term “Board” each place such term appears and inserting “Bureau”.

(b) MODIFICATION TO EXEMPTION FOR SMALL SERVICERS OF MORTGAGE LOANS.—Section 6 of the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974 (12 U.S.C. 2605) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(n) SMALL SERVICER EXEMPTION.—The Bureau shall, by regulation, provide exemptions to, or adjustments for, the provisions of this section for a servicer that annually services 30,000 or fewer mortgage loans, in order to reduce regulatory burdens while appropriately balancing consumer protections.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services.

After 1 hour of debate, it shall be in order to consider the further amendment printed in part B of House Report 115-443, if offered by the Member designated in the report, which shall be considered read and shall be separately debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to submit extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New York?

There was no objection.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 10 years, the community financial institution industry has undergone a dramatic transformation. Since 2006, more than 1,500 banks have failed, been acquired, or merged, due to economic factors and the overwhelmingly expensive regulation brought forth by the passage of the Dodd-Frank Act.

During this same period, there has been a drought in de novo banks. In fact, only five new banks charters and 16 new credit union charters have been granted.

Today, for the first time in over 125 years, there are fewer than 6,000 banks and, roughly, 6,000 credit unions serving all consumers in the United States. This is proof that the community financial institutions need smart, commonsense regulatory relief so they can properly serve local communities by assisting with small business startups and consumer credit.

My bill, H.R. 3971, the Community Institution Mortgage Relief Act, would alleviate harmful burdens on small institutions across the Nation while saving money for low-income borrowers. This bipartisan measure would exempt small community-based institutions from mandatory escrow requirements.

My bill will also provide relief from new regulations that have nearly doubled the cost of servicing loans, specifically to low-income borrowers. I know that certain institutions will wish to continue to provide the same escrow services to their consumers, and they are welcome to do that.

By offering these real changes, smaller institutions—like the GOP Federal Credit Union, for example, in my district—can once again focus their full attention on relationship lending in the community without worry of government overregulation.

Once again, the current law mandates that all institutions follow escrow requirements, which raises the cost of credit for those borrowers who can least afford it, while harming small local institutions.

Mr. Speaker, I specifically thank the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) for working with me on this bill, and I appreciate his support throughout the process.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to vote for the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time, and I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING), the chairman of the Financial Services Committee, control the remainder of the time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 3971.

Contrary to what is implied by its title, H.R. 3971 would not provide regulatory relief to community banks. Instead, this bill would allow a large number of mortgage services to drop important consumer protections and set the stage for a return of the harmful practices of the subprime meltdown and the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

Dodd-Frank tasked the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau with implementing mortgage rules under the Truth in Lending Act that would restrict the types of practices that led to the financial crisis. This bill would harm consumers by raising the Con-

sumer Financial Protection Bureau's exemption threshold on escrow accounts requirements for higher priced mortgage loans. Mortgages are classified as higher priced if the annual percentage rate—or APR—exceeds the average prime offer rate by 1.5 percent, and higher priced mortgage loans often reflect riskier or subprime borrowers.

Pursuant to the Dodd-Frank Act, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau issued escrow rules that require borrowers with higher priced mortgage loans to escrow their homeowners insurance, property taxes, and private mortgage insurance for at least the first 5 years of their mortgage.

Escrow accounts are an important consumer protection mechanism, especially for higher risk borrowers, because they ensure that homeowners have funds for these expenses, thereby reducing mortgage default or loss of the property. In fact, before the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau issued its final rule on escrow requirements in 2013, a Federal Reserve study from 2011 found that consumers with higher priced mortgages that did not have an escrow account in the first year after the consummation of their mortgage had higher instances of default.

Escrow accounts also keep homeowners from being blindsided by additional costs at the end of each year and provide a more accurate monthly cost estimate for homeownership when the loan is originated. That is why the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's rules are designed to ensure that homeowners understand and can meet the full cost of homeownership.

Even though escrow accounts are particularly important for these higher priced loans, they are certainly not unique. In fact, most homeowners escrow these funds. Loans insured by the Federal Housing Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture must have borrower escrow accounts, and conventional mortgages with a loan-to-value ratio of 80 percent or higher require them as well.

I have not heard a single convincing argument as to what is so burdensome about banks with \$25 billion in assets ensuring that their borrowers have enough money set aside every month to pay their taxes and insurance.

Furthermore, banks with less than \$2 billion in assets that serve rural or underserved areas are already exempt from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's escrow requirements, which reflects the Bureau's commitment to balanced and tailored regulations. This bill would make a dramatic leap from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's targeted relief and exempt banks up to \$25 billion in assets, or over 98 percent of banks, from the escrow requirement. They would get this exemption regardless of whether they are serving underserved borrowers and without any evidence that this large exemption would increase access to credit for those who need it.

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau also addressed the fact that large servicers, especially servicers that serviced loans they did not own for an extended period of time, often did not adequately communicate with customers or appropriately track paperwork. During the crisis, this contributed to millions of unnecessary foreclosures and, later on, several billion-dollar settlements for abusive and fraudulent business practices.

In its rule, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau also provides other flexibilities through exemptions to the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act loan servicing and escrow account administration requirements to only small bank servicers, if they and their affiliates own the loans they service, and service no more than 5,000 loans each year. H.R. 3971 would increase this exemption by 500 percent, from 5,000 loans a year to 30,000 loans, allowing significantly larger bank servicers to avoid these important consumer safeguards, and only requiring the lenders to hold the loans in portfolio for 3 years.

□ 1230

So let's be clear, homeowners do not get to choose their own mortgage servicer, and the least we can do is ensure that they are adequately protected after they sign on the dotted line.

As we saw leading up to the 2008 financial crisis, servicers often choose profits over people, and that is why we need the Consumer Bureau to look out for the needs of consumers. The Consumer Bureau has continued to do its job in spite of the unrelenting Republican campaign to slow it down or eliminate it completely.

Simply put, H.R. 3971 would enable larger servicers, whose incentives are not aligned with the owners of the loans or the borrowers, to be able to revive the abusive practices involved with predatory lending that contributed to the 2008 financial crisis. This is the second time in less than 2 weeks that I have come before you to discuss a bill that would erode vital consumer protections under the Truth in Lending Act for borrowers with high-priced mortgage loans.

I cannot support legislation that would keep consumers looking at high-cost mortgages from the vital protections and scrutiny they deserve. For all these reasons, I oppose H.R. 3971.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3971, the Community Institution Mortgage Relief Act. It is an important bill that is cosponsored by a bipartisan group of Members—again, bipartisan. It was approved in the Financial Services Committee with a strong bipartisan vote of 41-19, and it has a long track record of bipartisan support,

and all Members should take note of this.

I want to thank the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY), who is a fine member of the Financial Services Committee. I want to thank her for introducing the legislation and really helping lead our congressional effort to provide needed regulatory relief for our small community banks and credit unions, to give them relief from rules that are unfairly restricting our constituents' access to mortgage credit. This is mortgage credit that would help Americans achieve a greater level of financial independence by being able to achieve perhaps their version of the American Dream, a home they can actually afford to keep.

H.R. 3971 is a narrowly focused, modest effort to resolve concerns related to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's rules implementing Dodd-Frank Act provisions on escrows and mortgage servicing. The CFPB's escrow requirements for property taxes and insurance are unnecessary, they are impractical, and they are a significant expense that just makes it harder for community banks and credit unions to offer mortgage loans to their customers and members.

These escrow accounts are the accounts that people use to pay their taxes and pay their homeowners insurance. With the amendment soon to be introduced by the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN), a cosponsor of this legislation, this bipartisan bill would simply relieve certain small community banks and credit unions from the obligation to provide escrow accounts if they have consolidated assets of \$10 billion or less and hold the mortgage on their balance sheet for 3 years.

Again, Mr. Speaker, if they are holding the mortgage on their balance sheet, they have every incentive—every incentive to protect the collateral and ensure that tax and insurance payments are current. There is no reason to force them, these community banks and credit unions, to go through this very expensive process of escrowing, particularly if the customer or the credit union member doesn't want it.

A large majority of community banks do not currently escrow because of the cost of which I have spoken. And requiring them to do so, Mr. Speaker, is only going to stop them from making loans; fewer home loans, fewer people with homeownership opportunity.

You know, a community banker in Missouri recently told us that the CFPB's rule has forced his bank to "limit in-house residential real estate lending." The banker went on to say: "This is hurting the housing market and our community." That just shouldn't be happening, Mr. Speaker.

A credit union official in Pennsylvania told us that this bureaucratic CFPB requirement has caused his credit union members to become "very upset and confused as to why they were

unable to pay their taxes how they always had."

He went on to write: "These members had managed their tax and insurance payments for years without institution interference, but suddenly they feel like the government now told them they were not responsible enough to manage their own affairs."

This echoes precisely what we learn from a credit union leader in Pennsylvania who wrote a letter saying that "changes to mortgage servicing rules have made it more expensive and more time consuming. Servicing rules and regulations have become a full-time regulatory and compliance nightmare." Again, Mr. Speaker, fewer home loans means fewer homes for our constituents. It is not right.

To fix these problems, H.R. 3971 would also increase the small servicer exemption threshold from 5,000 mortgages to 20,000 mortgages annually, which better delineates small servicers from the large servicers. A community bank or credit union that services fewer than 20,000 mortgages should not be subject to the same regulatory scrutiny as the big financial institution that has a \$2 trillion servicing portfolio.

Again, these important reforms will give smaller credit unions and community banks greater flexibility to ensure more of their members and customers can get a loan to buy a home and stay in their home.

Again, Mr. Speaker, Ms. TENNEY's bill has strong bipartisan support. It has in the past; I expect it will have it again today. It solves a real problem for our constituents, and I urge adoption of the measure.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important for us to realize that, in present law, community banks of \$2 billion or less are exempted from requiring escrow accounts on higher priced loans if they serve rural and underserved areas. So we are talking about present law that gives this exemption. And not only does it exempt these real community banks of \$2 billion or less, the banks are required to serve rural communities and underserved areas.

This is so important because, oftentimes, these are loans to riskier customers. These are loans where they are charging a higher interest rate. These are loans where they are taking more risk, and so when we hear those on the opposite side of the aisle talking about different ways to service the rural communities, this is one way that the law allows that kind of attention to rural communities and underserved areas. They say: Small community banks, you don't have to have escrow accounts, and so what we are saying to you is give your attention to these rural and underserved areas where they are higher priced loans, they are

riskier accounts, and we are not going to require you to have to force upon these kinds of accounts the rules that will be forced upon different kinds of financial institutions.

If we adopt this bill, it would not be about community banks at all. And I have to disagree with my chairman of the committee who talked about this, in some way, enhancing community banks' ability to service rural and underserved areas. They are talking about expanding the exemption from \$2 billion or less to \$25 billion. That is not a community bank. We don't have any community banks that are worth \$25 billion or more. I want everybody to be clear what this bill is attempting to do.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Missouri (Mr. LUETKEMEYER), the chairman of the Financial Services Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING), our distinguished chairman of the committee.

I want to start by thanking the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY), who has become a real advocate for small financial institutions and their customers. Escrow requirements are costly and burdensome for community banks and credit unions. Many institutions lack the resources to create and maintain escrow accounts in house, and outsourcing the work is, in many cases, cost prohibitive. But this doesn't mean that these financial institutions shouldn't be in the business of mortgage lending.

H.R. 3971 amends the Truth in Lending Act to direct the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to exempt from certain escrow requirements a loan secured by a first lien on a principal dwelling if the loan is held by a creditor with assets of \$25 billion or less.

Under the bill, the Bureau must also provide either exemptions to or adjustments from the mortgage loan servicing and escrow requirements of the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act. That relief applies only to servicers of 30,000 or fewer mortgage loans. These aren't high thresholds, nor are the institutions that will benefit large or complex.

The gentlewoman's legislation is targeted squarely on the small banks and credit unions servicing Main Street; the financial institutions that have relationships with their customers.

This is an important aspect of the bill that isn't delineated in the legislative text. I can tell you, as someone who has made loans in my community for more than 30 years, that these small institutions care about their customers. Community bankers help people fulfill their dreams of homeownership because they care about the customer and economic health of their community.

The unfortunate reality is that, across the Nation, these banks and

credit unions are exiting the residential mortgage business. I heard from one just a few days ago. It isn't necessarily one rule that is driving this trend. It is the onslaught of rules from the CFPB and the Federal prudential regulators that, in totality, make mortgage lending and servicing cost prohibitive.

These rules aren't helping consumers. They are forcing banks to cut off services and access to mortgage credit. They are bushing borrowers to large financial institutions and nonbank servicers, the very entities that the ranking member and some of my friends on the other side of the aisle say pose the greatest threat to consumers.

The gentleman's legislation ensures that consumers continue to have various credit choices by allowing smaller institutions to remain in the mortgage market without being deterred by the high cost of regulatory compliance. The increase in the small servicer exemption threshold will better delineate small servicers from the large servicers and give credit unions and community banks greater flexibility. This flexibility will help to ensure that more of their customers have access to the mortgage market and achieve the dream of homeownership.

We shouldn't be driving that business away from small servicers, and we shouldn't subject community institutions, in this instance, to the same regulatory regime as larger ones.

This is an issue the Financial Services Committee has worked on for several years, always with bipartisan support. I want to thank the gentleman from New York for picking up this legislation and for diligently working on this matter. I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting H.R. 3971 and other measures that allow our Nation's smaller financial institutions, their customers, and their communities to thrive.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to further explain what this bill would do and why it could be harmful.

Under the present law, the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act would require that the servicers handle no more than 5,000 or less loans. Why is this important? It is important because when you have servicers that are handling a relatively small number of these kinds of accounts, they can pay attention to them.

Don't forget, these are loans by community banks. They are riskier, they are higher priced loans, they are directed toward rural communities and communities that basically you have to pay a lot of attention to when you give out these loans. And now this bill would say: Yes, we know that when you are servicing a small number, 5,000 or less, that the services have to pay attention because they are under the rule of the Real Estate Settlement Proce-

dures Act, and that act says not only do you have to pay attention and you have to contact your borrower when you are going to transfer the loan—and let me tell you how important this is.

This is so important because when you transfer a loan, if you don't give the kind of notification to the borrower that they will understand that the originator of the loan no longer has the servicing or has the same servicing contract that is now going to move to another servicer, then people, oftentimes, end up not sending their payment to the right place. And guess what, I have seen this go on for months, and then people end up in a situation where they are defaulting on the loan, and the new servicers are putting them in a position where now their homes are in danger.

□ 1245

So this contact, this oversight, this attention that you pay to these small borrowers is so important, and that is why the 5,000.

Now, with this bill, they want to take it up to 30,000. What does that mean? It means that we are going to see the kind of problems that we have seen in the subprime meltdown that we have gone through.

We have found that servicers caused us the most problems. Of course, they didn't service the loans adequately. They lost them. They had people applying over and over again.

First of all, we discovered that many of the servicers had no training, that they were literally hired off the street, and that they were basically saying to senior citizens, 75 and 80 years old: We lost your paper. Reapply again. Reapply again. We are sorry.

It has been just an awful situation that was created because the servicers could not handle the volume that they were contracted with, oftentimes, for the financial institution that they were supposed to be doing this work for.

So, here you have a bill that literally is not about community banks. This is about increasing the number of banks that can now have the kind of protection that we were giving to the very small community banks. So don't believe this is about community banks.

In addition to that, what you are doing is you are changing the rules and the laws under the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act that protects these rural borrowers and these small, high-risk loans that are in these communities that need a special kind of help.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds just to say we are losing a community bank or credit union a day in America, and we are losing them because they are drowning in a sea of Dodd-Frank regulations; and as they perish, so do the dreams of many of our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, if a small community bank or credit union makes a loan and

keeps it on their books, guess what. They want the loan repaid. They are going to make sure that the taxes are kept current. They are going to make sure the insurance is kept current. They don't need the burdensome regulation coming out from some Washington bureaucrat telling them how to do their business. They want to ensure the loan gets paid anyway.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ROTHFUS), the vice chairman of the Financial Services Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit.

Mr. ROTHFUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3971, the Community Institution Mortgage Relief Act, and I thank Representative TENNEY for her hard work on this piece of legislation.

At the Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit Subcommittee, we often talk about right-sizing regulations. If we want to have a robust financial system that balances smart regulation and consumer protections with the need to make capital available to American consumers, we need to consider targeted opportunities to tailor requirements to fit the size and nature of the financial institution. Representative TENNEY's legislation does just that.

This Community Institution Mortgage Relief Act directs the CFPB to exempt creditors with \$25 billion or less in assets from certain costly escrow and impound requirements on loans secured by a first lien on a consumer's principal dwelling. These requirements are especially burdensome for community financial institutions. They often force institutions to pass increased costs on to their consumers. This can drive business away from small banks and credit unions which are already suffering from overregulation and other economic challenges. As a result, in some cases, community financial institutions have exited the mortgage business altogether. This does not help consumers, and it further imperils our shrinking number of community banks and credit unions.

This bill offers a targeted, reasonable fix so that these institutions can continue to serve their customers. This is smart. It is reasonable. It is common sense, particularly for those who understand how overregulation from Washington, D.C., has hurt consumer choice.

I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS), a fellow Texan and a member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in favor of H.R. 3971, the Community Institution Mortgage Relief Act of 2017.

I would like to also thank the gentleman from New York (Ms. TENNEY)

for her hard work on this piece of legislation and her leadership on this issue.

An overwhelming majority of my Financial Services Committee colleagues recognized the need for this bill, and I hope that the full House will also recognize that very same need by voting in favor of this meaningful legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the problem right now is that community banks are being crushed by the sheer weight, magnitude, and intricacy of habitual Washington regulations, and this is all thanks to the crippling effects of the failed Dodd-Frank.

Currently, community financial institutions are facing overly burdensome rules implemented by the CFPB. The fact of the matter is we need H.R. 3971 in order to provide needed regulatory relief to small financial institutions.

By making two simple, minor changes, community financial institutions will be able to better serve their customers. To be clear, the institutions we are trying to help are not big banks, and they do not have the capabilities of the big banks.

To comply with current burdensome escrow rules, community financial institutions must devote more resources, time, and employees to compliance, and those costs get passed down to the consumer.

Oftentimes, under the pressure of the current regulatory framework, these financial institutions will choose not to participate in the escrow market at all simply because the rules are financially and technically hindering. By directing the CFPB to provide relief, to lower the thresholds, we can help make things just a little bit easier on these vital community banks.

Overall, we should not allow oppressive regulations to drive opportunity away from small servicers. Big banks and community financial institutions are not the same, and we should not treat them as such.

As a small-business owner myself of over 44 years and a steadfast defender of Main Street, I do not hesitate to support this measure. It is good for this country. I see the need for the good people of central Texas to have more options.

Our job here in Washington, many miles away from our communities and those we love, is to do what we can to make their lives easier. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3971 makes life easier and takes a step in the direction of making America better.

In God we trust. Merry Christmas.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

It is important to understand why we have a Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and why it is the centerpiece of the Dodd-Frank reforms.

Prior to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, we did not have anybody looking out for consumers, and so that led us into the crisis that this country experienced in 2008 that took

us into a recession and almost a depression.

When I come before you with opposition to this kind of legislation, it is because I know and understand—and we should all understand—what we can do to protect our consumers and how we can work with community banks and what that means when we are talking about a bill like this, where real community banks of \$2 billion or less are dealing with populations that I have alluded to over and over again in the presentation of my opposition to this bill: the rural communities and those communities that are underserved and where these are riskier loans and where they need not only the attention of the small community banks, but the servicers who service these loans, and knowing that the servicers who service a small number of loans can, in fact, pay the attention to them that is required by RESPA and make sure that the people are understanding, when there are transfers and they are in contact with them constantly—and this goes for everything from transfers to modifications—and how to deal with high-risk loans, who may need to modify those loans, who they would talk to, how they would talk to them.

I want to tell you, if you expand this, and you have servicers that are handling 30,000 or more, these borrowers are not going to get this kind of attention. So these escrows that we are talking about are extremely important, and we should know exactly who we are protecting and who we are not protecting.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR), chairman of the Financial Services Subcommittee on Monetary Policy and Trade.

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman HENSARLING for his leadership, and especially a thank-you to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY), my friend, for her outstanding leadership on this issue; and I rise in support of her legislation, the Community Institution Mortgage Relief Act.

Homeownership is part of the American Dream; however, an ill-conceived rule promulgated by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has made it harder for Americans to purchase a home.

In typical one-size-fits-all Washington bureaucrat fashion, the Bureau's rule places excessive escrow and mortgage servicing requirements on the backs of smaller community financial institutions and mortgage servicers.

What the Bureau missed is that these lenders are rarely in subprime lending and frequently hold the loan in portfolio for the term of the loan. This means these lenders have a very strong incentive to ensure that taxes and insurance premiums are being paid because they are taking on 100 percent of

the downside risk if the borrower fails to hold up their side of the deal, and, therefore, an escrow account isn't necessary.

However, as a direct result of the rule, there is less consumer choice and more expense. That is because many community financial institutions are leaving the market or have been forced to charge home buyers more so they can afford to hire the extra professional staff they need to comply with this rule.

For these reasons, I support the Community Institution Mortgage Relief Act, which exempts community financial institutions with assets of \$25 billion or less from much of the regulatory burden of the Bureau's rule.

Again, I want to thank my good friend from New York, Congresswoman CLAUDIA TENNEY, and our chairman, Congressman JEB HENSARLING, for their leadership on this issue, and I urge my colleagues to vote for the Community Institution Mortgage Relief Act.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am paying special attention to this legislation, and I take pause when I see bills like H.R. 3971 that are just a small part of Republicans' relentless attack on the work of the Consumer Bureau.

The Consumer Bureau's work on high-cost loans and consumer protections for them was well thought through and the result of careful research.

Leading up to the 2008 financial crisis, many looking to fulfill the American Dream and purchase a house were convinced to take out higher cost loans without any regard for their ability to repay. They were sold false promises about the costs of their mortgage without adequate information and protections.

The Consumer Bureau took years to talk to experts, hear from advocates, and do the research to come up with a strong rule to prevent those types of abuses from occurring again, while also providing regulatory relief to banks that serve rural and underserved communities. So let me take pause and, again, focus everyone on rural and underserved communities.

I am oftentimes appalled by the fact that we have too many legislators who represent rural communities and underserved communities, but when it comes to looking out for their financial interests, they are not doing it. Yet they go back to these communities and they talk about all the other kinds of issues. They talk about people who are not saluting the flag properly. They will talk about freedom of choice issues, and they will rally folks around everything except their financial interests.

□ 1300

If rural communities are being hurt, oftentimes it is because the very people who say they represent them are

not, indeed, representing them, and we can see this in this kind of discussion.

So, again, we are focused on making sure that rural and underserved communities are served properly, that they are not thrown to the wolves and thrown into situations where they can't be paid attention to after they take out these loans.

When they take out these loans, they need servicers who are trained, servicers who are committed, servicers who understand why rural and underserved communities need special protection, and who will work with them, who will contact them, who will work with them to work out situations where loan modifications may be required or requested.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to continue to oppose. I understand that there are others who would like to open this up, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Utah (Mrs. LOVE), an outstanding member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mrs. LOVE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3971, the Community Institution Mortgage Relief Act, because the ability to purchase a home is one of the most sacred financial goals we have as Americans. This is an important path to home ownership, and we are doing everything we can to make sure it remains accessible.

This bill will help do that by ensuring that community banks and credit unions stay in the mortgage lending business and continue to provide potential homeowners with diverse credit options in their communities.

I would like to thank Representative CLAUDIA TENNEY from New York for providing such a great relief to community institutions.

Unfortunately, as we have seen too often, this is one more instance where government efforts to protect people are inadvertently having the opposite effect. Though intended to protect homeowners, the CFPB's final rule and guidance on escrow and mortgage servicing requirements are so burdensome and costly for smaller institutions, that we are driving mortgage businesses away from them.

This comes on top of an already burdensome regulatory environment in which our small financial institutions are facing rules and regulations that were made for larger banks, causing them to close their doors at a rate of one small institution a day.

We need a more tailored regulatory environment that balances the credit needs of consumers with appropriate consumer protections. This legislation would do that by exempting lenders with assets of \$20 billion or less from escrow requirements on high-priced mortgage loans they hold in portfolio and would provide much-needed regulatory relief for small servicers.

With smaller staff and fewer resources, existing escrow rules are financially and technically prohibitive

for small community institutions. In addition, these smaller lenders often hold the liability in portfolio for the term of the loan, making an escrow account unnecessary, because the lender has a strong interest in protecting its collateral by ensuring that taxes and insurance premiums get paid.

When it comes to purchasing or refinancing a home, it is tremendously important that consumers have credit options. We preserve those options by allowing community institutions to enter or remain in the mortgage market.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from Utah.

Mrs. LOVE. Mr. Speaker, the fact is, in my district, and in many other districts, there are small banks that are getting out of the mortgage lending business, and they cannot provide those options for the communities that they live in.

We need to do everything we can to make sure that we are allowing these institutions to stay in the market without being deterred by the high cost of regulatory compliance, and thank goodness H.R. 3971 achieves those goals. I support it.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to how much time I have left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky). The gentlewoman from California has 1½ minutes remaining.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is strongly opposed by all of the consumer groups: Americans for Financial Reform, Center for American Progress, Center for Responsible Lending, the National Consumer Law Center, and Public Citizen.

Why are they so opposed to this bill? This bill would, again, amend the Truth in Lending Act—that is TILA—and the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act—that is RESPA—to widen the size of two exemptions that the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has already provided for smaller sized institutions on escrow accounts for higher priced mortgage loans and servicing requirements for small mortgage servicers.

Under the bill, escrow accounts would no longer be required for riskier, high-priced loans at institutions with less than \$25 billion in assets. Currently, the exemption applies to firms with less than \$2 billion in assets. The smaller service exception for increased notification requirements to consumers would be increased, again, from servicers with 5,000 loans to those with 30,000 loans.

Why do all of these consumer groups oppose this legislation? Because it is obvious what is happening here. We are taking away the protection from those who need it the most. We are not doing

anything for community banks. There are no \$25 billion community banks.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that my colleagues in this House oppose this bill. It goes in the opposite direction of what we have done to try and give protection to those consumers who need protection the most, and the Dodd-Frank reform has done this, and I would just ask opposition to this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN).

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, the gentlewoman from New York started this debate with an amazing statistic when she said that over 1,500 small banks and financial institutions have been forced to merge or be acquired or go out of business altogether since the passage of the Dodd-Frank bill.

Those of us who opposed the Dodd-Frank bill at that time said this would happen, and that is exactly what happened. The big have gotten bigger.

I read recently that the five largest Wall Street banks had 22 percent of total deposits in this Nation before Dodd-Frank, but last year, when I read the update, they now have 44 percent of total deposits.

There is a big government, big business duopoly that controls too much of the life of this country, and in every overregulated industry, it ends up being consolidated and controlled in the hands of a few big giants, and that is what has happened in this case.

I remember when my wife and I bought our first house. We signed about two or three pages many years ago. Three and a half years ago, we bought a lake house, and we had to sign over 100 pages of documents that, being a lawyer and a judge, I knew that all it was was meaningless paperwork for bureaucrats and lawyers.

This is important legislation. I have had many bankers across the State of Tennessee who have told me how harmful and how difficult it has been for the smaller institutions to comply with all the rules and regulations and red tape.

Mr. Speaker, we need to pass this bill, and I urge its support.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's regulations address many questionable practices that contributed to the collapse of the housing market. Such practices were widespread in the mortgage servicing industry. The Bureau's servicing rules apply across the board, while providing a narrow exemption for small servicers.

This exemption minimizes the regulatory compliance burden on small and community banks. Expanding current exemptions to larger institutions, however, just opens the door wide to abuses by larger banks primarily doing business not in the communities, the rural

communities and the underserved communities, but outside of the communities where they are based, and by nonbanks, which still make most of the riskier subprime mortgage loans.

Mr. Speaker, I continue to ask opposition to this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD), a very hardworking member of the Financial Services Committee.

Mr. BUDD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the gentlewoman from New York's legislation, H.R. 3971, and I thank her for her leadership on this very important issue.

As many of my friends here today know, Dodd-Frank and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau have made life very difficult for many. Luckily, the Community Institution Mortgage Relief Act will, once again, solve a problem that they created, this time regarding escrow and mortgage servicing requirements.

The CFPB rule regarding these accounts has done nothing more than accelerate industry consolidation in this space, particularly causing harm to rural consumers, leaving them with even less financing options.

This bill reverses that problem, though, and will help bring local banks and financial institutions back into the picture. This bill simply lets them re-enter the mortgage market and directs the CFPB to exempt them from the escrow account requirement of Dodd-Frank.

Now, though this is a bipartisan bill, some of my friends on the other side of the aisle may claim that this bill removes consumer safeguards, but I would argue that this CFPB rule that they support creates an unnecessary burden on local banks and credit unions, which, in the end, hurts local communities and people that they claim to protect with this very rule.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad this bill remains largely bipartisan and, as I said, returns power back to the community financial institutions and ensures that consumers have credit through various credit choices.

I want to thank Representative TENNEY for her steadfast leadership on this issue, and I urge adoption of her legislation.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire again as to how much time I have left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from California has 8½ minutes remaining.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to move now to say a word about what my colleague is attempting to do. I appreciate my colleague from California (Mr. SHERMAN), who is going to offer an amendment that would lower the extremely high

exemption thresholds in the underlying bill.

I think that, having talked to him, I do understand that he believes that this is important to expand opportunity rather than to limit the ability for protection for certain of our consumers who come from these areas that I have described as rural and areas that are underserved.

This amendment that he is going to present would allow creditors, again, with less than \$10 billion in assets, to be exempted from escrow requirements on higher priced mortgage loans if they hold loans in portfolios for 3 years and allow servicers that service 20,000 loans or less to be exempted from enhanced consumer protection requirements under the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act.

His amendment changes it a little bit from \$25 billion to \$10 billion, that is still too much, and from 30,000 loans or less to 20,000 loans or less to be exempted from, again, enhanced consumer protection requirements under the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act.

Although I am pleased that this amendment would tighten up the language in the underlying bill somewhat, I remain concerned about the impacts it could have on many consumers. The bill is called the Community Institution Mortgage Relief Act of 2017, and the title implies that it will relieve our Nation's smaller financial institutions from regulatory burdens.

Now, we all know that community banking is not purely a function of size, but when the Consumer Bureau conducted research for its escrow requirements rulemaking, it found that none of the entities it identified as operating predominantly in rural or underserved areas had total assets as of the end of 2009 greater than \$2 billion.

□ 1315

And when the Consumer Bureau researched mortgage service and practices, it concluded: "The problematic practices that have plagued the servicing industry, particularly in recent years, are, to a large extent, a function of a business model in which servicing is viewed as a discrete line of business and profit center."

However, they also found that approximately 96 percent of community bank and small credit union services that only purchase a hold, mortgage service, and rights for mortgage loans, they actually own or originate service 5,000 or fewer loans. Yet this amendment would exceed the Consumer Bureau's research base that sets that threshold by billions of dollars and its carefully researched loan service and threshold by 400 percent.

So if the amendment is adopted, I must continue to oppose the bill because it would undermine the work of the Consumer Bureau and weaken consumer protections in homeownership. Congress should not be complicit in these acts by passing legislation that

further erodes the rights and protections of America's consumers. We must continue to do all that we can to ensure mortgage loan borrowers are fully aware of the terms and conditions of their mortgage loans and how much they will owe in obtaining these loans.

If we are successful in convincing our colleagues today that they should not support this bill, I will be happy to work with my colleague, who I know has good intentions, to see what we can do to address what I think are some of his concerns. But for now, I must oppose the bill, and even with the amendment, it does not satisfy the concerns that I have addressed here. It does nothing to protect those in the rural communities and the underserved communities, and it does nothing to help community banks.

So I am opposed both to the bill and to the amendment, and I ask for a "no" vote.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time I have remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 7 minutes remaining.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to my colleague, the ranking member, and I know how much respect she has—bordering, perhaps, on religious fealty—to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and I must admit, now that it is being led by our former colleague Mick Mulvaney of South Carolina, I am taking a renewed interest in their actions and their pronouncements. I am just curious, as time goes by, whether the ranking member will continue to show such faith and confidence in that particular institution.

Here is what we know, Mr. Speaker. All across America, we continue to lose one community bank or credit union a day. They are not perishing of natural causes. They are perishing from the sheer weight, volume, load, cost, complexity, and expense of the Dodd-Frank regulatory burden, of which this CFPB rule is just one aspect.

Again, as my colleague, the chairman of the Financial Institutions and Consumer Credit Subcommittee—I believe it was he who pointed it out. There is not any one particular regulation that may cause the demise of these financial institutions, but it is the totality of them all. And as they perish, so perishes the American Dream of homeownership for so many of our constituents, particularly in rural areas like much of the Fifth District of Texas that I have the honor and pleasure of representing.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that we save our community financial institutions. They play a vital role in our economy. It takes small banks and credit unions to fund our small businesses, which are the job engine of America. But again, they are being crushed by a regulatory burden.

So I want to thank the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. TENNEY) for bringing, again, just one needed, vital regulatory relief bill.

Again, let's make sure, Mr. Speaker, everybody knows what this bill is talking about.

Number one, already in current law, there is an exemption for small financial institutions dealing with having mortgage servicing and mortgage escrows. We are trying to bring it to a more reasonable level, an exemption that already exists. And I assume that the ranking member believes in the exemption or she would offer legislation to repeal it in total. So now we are debating how large this exemption ought to be.

Given how many of our constituents still are in need of mortgage opportunities, given the demise of our community banks and credit unions, I think what we are trying to do here is most reasonable. Soon, the gentleman from California on the other side of the aisle, a respected Democratic member of the committee, will offer an amendment that I believe the sponsor of the legislation—I, myself, am willing to accept because we are trying to work on a bipartisan basis.

There is a lot of bipartisan legislation that goes to the House Financial Services Committee. I wish the ranking member would participate in more of it, as she did last week. I am sorry she is losing out on this opportunity today, so I am happy to work with the gentleman from California on a bipartisan basis to get this legislation done.

Another important note to be had, Mr. Speaker, is we get this implication from the ranking member that, oh, my Lord, if we pass this bill, H.R. 3971, all of a sudden, all consumer protection law disappears from the books. Well, I have got good news: it doesn't.

After the passage of H.R. 3971, all of these mortgages will still be subject to the Equal Credit Opportunity Act; they will still be subject to regulation B; they will still be subject to the Fair Housing Act; they will still be subject to the Fair Credit Reporting Act; they will still be subject to the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act; they will still be subject to the Homeowners Protection Act; they will still be subject to the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act.

I have got a whole sheet here, Mr. Speaker.

Again, that is a red herring. At the end of the day, this is about ensuring our constituents, particularly in rural areas, have access to mortgage credit and that community banks and credit unions that are absolutely suffering under the weight of the load aren't forced to escrow when they keep a mortgage on their books for 3 years. They are going to make sure the taxes are paid. They are going to make sure the insurance is paid. Instead, all that regulation does is burdens them and causes them to make fewer mortgage loans and, in some cases, no mortgage loans.

So, again, I just want salute the gentlewoman from New York. I want to thank her for her leadership and what she is doing for her constituents in rural New York, and I urge everybody to adopt H.R. 3971.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate on the bill has expired.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. SHERMAN

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have an amendment at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 1, line 16, strike "\$25,000,000,000" and insert "\$10,000,000,000".

Page 2, line 20, strike "30,000" and insert "20,000".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 647, the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, this bill began with a proposal by Mr. LUETKEMEYER of Missouri two Congresses ago. Last Congress, I introduced it, and now the gentlewoman from New York is carrying the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't be here supporting this bill in any form if it undermined Dodd-Frank—I cosponsored Dodd-Frank—or if it undermined the CFPB, an institution that I think is very important and was created by Dodd-Frank.

With the amendment that I am proposing, this bill goes back to the text that I introduced last year. That text came before the Financial Services Committee and secured the vote of all Republicans and 60 percent of the Democrats. Now, you can't get all the votes all the time, but if you can get, for any particular draft, 100 percent of the Republicans and 60 percent of the Democrats on the committee, that, I think, is bipartisan legislation.

Now, the first part of this bill and, by far, the most important part deals with loans made by small institutions that would otherwise be required to have an impound account. An impound account is when the bank collects from you not only your mortgage payment but collects, every month, some money toward your property taxes and toward your insurance, and then the bank pays those bills for you.

Small institutions are not set up in order to keep track of how much property tax to collect and pay or fire and other homeowners insurance. They would rather rely on the borrower, somebody they know, to pay their fire insurance, to pay their property taxes.

Now, we can count on them to make sure that they are not giving this responsibility to somebody who can't handle it, because they are required, under this bill, to hold the mortgage for 3 years in their portfolio.

Keep in mind that the whole requirement only relates to the first 5 years.

So here, they have to keep it in their portfolio for 3 years. This, I think, ensures that the bank or credit union or other small institution will make sure that the property taxes and property insurance are paid, while, at the same time, it won't take out of the market those small institutions that can't set up special impound accounts.

A second part of this bill deals with simply telling the CFPB to make whatever adjustments it thinks are appropriate for small institutions with regard to the small servicer exemption. That leaves that authority with the CFPB. Under this amendment, the rule, whatever they decide to do for smaller institutions applies to those that are servicing not 30,000, but only 20,000 total loans, because it makes sense to have different, less complicated rules for smaller servicers.

So I don't think my amendment is sufficient to gain support for the bill from the ranking member. The bill in its amended form, it was sufficient to get 60 percent of the Democrats to vote for it in committee last year.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from New York for her work on this issue and what I understand is her support for this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I claim the time in opposition to the amendment, although I am not opposed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentlewoman from New York is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman HENSARLING, and I thank the gentleman from California for his amendment and work on this bill.

I think this amendment is acceptable, and adopting it will still allow the bill to provide some regulatory relief to our small community banks and credit unions, and it will also assist in helping our low-income borrowers in districts like mine, NY-22, where we have lost so many community banks. I think that this will help encourage lending and allow small community banks to again lend to people who are in lower income levels.

I urge my colleagues to adopt the amendment, and I thank the gentleman again from California (Mr. SHERMAN), for his hard work on the bill and for this bipartisan effort.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, seeing no further speakers, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended, and on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN).

The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN).

The amendment was agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

□ 1330

MOTION TO RECOMMIT

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I have a motion to recommit at the desk.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is the gentlewoman opposed to the bill?

Ms. TITUS. I am opposed in its current form.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the motion to recommit.

The Clerk read as follows:

Ms. Titus moves to recommit the bill H.R. 3971 to the Committee on Financial Services with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with the following amendment:

Add at the end the following:

SEC. 3. PROTECTING CONSUMERS FROM EXCESSIVE HOUSING COSTS AND PREDATORY LENDERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—No creditor or servicer may make use of the amendments made by this Act if the creditor or servicer has either been—

(1) found to have committed or engaged in an unfair, deceptive, or abusive act or practice under Federal law in connection with any transaction with a consumer for a consumer financial product or service; or

(2) convicted of fraud under Federal or State law in connection with a residential mortgage loan.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section, the terms “State” and “consumer financial product or service” have the meaning given those terms, respectively, under section 1002 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act.

Ms. TITUS (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Nevada?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Nevada is recognized for 5 minutes in support of her motion.

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, this is the final amendment to the bill. It will not kill the bill or send it back to committee. If adopted, the bill will immediately proceed to final passage, as amended.

My motion to recommit is just a commonsense measure that I believe everybody in this House can support because it would prevent the bad actors from being able to use the exemptions in the underlying bill to dodge the consumer protections that are found in both the Truth in Lending Act and the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act.

My motion says if a lender has committed or engaged in an unfair, deceptive, or abusive act or practice under Federal law in connection with any transaction with a consumer for a financial product or service, or if they have been convicted of fraud under Federal or State law in connection with a residential mortgage loan, they cannot avail themselves of the bill's decreased requirements.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, I represent the heart of the Las Vegas valley. More than 43 million visitors come to my district every year from all around the world to enjoy our first class resorts, hotels, entertainment, and the natural beauty around us. It is also, though, home to over 2 million people.

Less than a decade ago, southern Nevada, unfortunately, had the additional distinction of being at the epicenter of the foreclosure crisis that was caused by the Great Recession. At its peak, nearly 70 percent of all homes in the Las Vegas valley were under water, and the foreclosure rate was five times the national average. For 62 straight months, Nevada led the Nation in foreclosures and delinquent mortgages. This is the number—just think about this—219,000 foreclosures occurred during that period.

Newspapers from coast to coast read like obituaries as home after home was boarded up, homelessness skyrocketed, and major developments along the Las Vegas strip that were under construction went belly-up, leaving high-rise rusting skeletons in the middle of the desert. We lost 80,000 construction jobs during that period.

We were one of the first States to be hit so hard by the recession and one of the last States to recover. But housing prices are coming back and new construction is taking place.

Unfortunately, it seems that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to turn back the clock and go back to the abusive practices, including predatory lending, that contributed to the Great Recession.

Supporters of this legislation—you have heard them—say it is needed to provide relief for smaller sized institutions and smaller sized mortgage servicers. But that is really the red herring here. The CFPB has already, as you heard too, provided a targeted exemption to cover those folks.

This bill is really about protecting the large servicers that failed to provide necessary loan documentation and to communicate openly with their customers, in turn contributing to millions of unnecessary disclosures and settlements for abusive business practices during the financial crisis.

Nevada, in fact, had to bring lawsuits against financial institutions like Countrywide and Bank of America that engaged in this predatory lending.

My motion to recommit would ensure that such lending practices and loan servicing activities cannot resurface at the expense of consumers.

This is especially important also in light of the fact that at the same time we are eroding consumer protections put in place after the financial crisis, my Republican colleagues are also simultaneously taking away affordable housing from my constituents. The “Job Cuts and Tax Act” passed by this House eliminates tax-exempt private activity bonds, a move that will stifle investments in affordable housing.

The Nevada Housing Division, for example, has already suspended its mortgage credit certificate program which provides an average of \$2,000 a year in Federal income tax savings to first-time home buyers and veterans because of the threat of this provision.

Furthermore, multifamily housing bonds make affordable housing possible for seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, and low-income families. Without the tax exemption on these bonds, Nevada can lose up to 7,000 rental homes.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask you: How can this body pass a bill that eliminates affordable rental homes; makes ownership more expensive for first-time home buyers; and opens the door, again, to predatory lending practices that target low-income borrowers and put them at risk of foreclosure?

This mix of anticonsumer and antiaffordable housing policies does not bode well for a country that suffered a housing crisis just a decade ago, so I would urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this motion to recommit.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I claim time in opposition.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I am looking at this motion to recommit, and, on its best day, it may be superfluous and redundant; and on its worst day, it may be confusing. But I fear, in many respects, it is just a smokescreen to give many of my friends on the other side of the aisle an excuse not to vote for the underlying legislation, H.R. 3971.

Already the CFPB has full UDAP authority to deal with unfair, deceptive, and abusive acts. That already exists. So this is a red herring that somehow people are using the lack of the passage of the MTR as a rationale not to support H.R. 3971, which is vitally needed for so many of our community financial institutions to be able to make home mortgage loans to hard-working Americans who deserve their chance at the American Dream.

Again, as I said earlier during this debate, Mr. Speaker, all of these mortgages continue to be subject to the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, the Fair Housing Act, the Fair Credit Reporting Act, the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, the Homeownership Counseling Act, the Homeowners Protection Act, the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act, the Secure and Fair Enforcement for Mortgage Licensing Act, the Truth in Lending Act, Regulation Z, and the list goes on and on and on.

That is simply an excuse. The MTR is an excuse not to save our struggling community banks and our citizens in rural America who deserve the services of these community banks and credit unions.

Again, on its best day, it is superfluous and redundant. On its worst day,

it is introducing confusing language into an already settled area of the law for consumer protection.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to reject the motion to recommit, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the previous question is ordered on the motion to recommit.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or votes objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

DIRECTING SECRETARY OF ENERGY TO REVIEW AND UPDATE REPORT ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF RE-REFINING OF USED LUBRICATING OIL

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1733) to direct the Secretary of Energy to review and update a report on the energy and environmental benefits of the re-refining of used lubricating oil.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1733

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. ENERGY SAVINGS FROM LUBRICATING OIL.

Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Energy, in cooperation with the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, shall—

(1) review and update the report prepared pursuant to section 1838 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005;

(2) after consultation with relevant Federal, State, and local agencies and affected industry and stakeholder groups, update data that was used in preparing that report; and

(3) prepare and submit to Congress a coordinated Federal strategy to increase the beneficial reuse of used lubricating oil, that—

(A) is consistent with national policy as established pursuant to section 2 of the Used Oil Recycling Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-463); and

(B) addresses measures needed to—

(i) increase the responsible collection of used oil;

(ii) disseminate public information concerning sustainable reuse options for used oil; and

(iii) promote sustainable reuse of used oil by Federal agencies, recipients of Federal grant funds, entities contracting with the Federal Government, and the general public.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material in the RECORD on the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this bill, H.R. 1733, was introduced by Energy and Commerce Committee member SUSAN BROOKS from Indiana on March 27 of this year. The legislation went through regular order, and it was reported by the full committee, without amendment, by a voice vote.

This bill, H.R. 1733, requires the Secretary of Energy to review and update a report on the energy and environmental benefits of re-refining used lubricating oil. The bill reauthorizes a study that was previously directed under the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

We know that recycling used lubricating oil provides environmental benefits. It does, in fact, reduce energy consumption, and, yes, it produces high-quality products for consumers.

H.R. 1733 is a good bipartisan bill. I want to thank Mrs. BROOKS for her hard work on this important issue and the other side of the aisle for working with us to bring the bill to the floor this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1733, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1733, which would update a 2006 Department of Energy report on the energy and environmental benefits of re-refining used lubricating oil.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1733 represents a commonsense bill aimed at saving energy and protecting the environment by finding additional ways to reuse lubricating oil.

Mr. Speaker, these measures may include increasing the collection of used oil, distributing public information on sustainable reuse, and encouraging the recycling of used oils.

Mr. Speaker, the U.S. is responsible for almost one-quarter of the global lubricating oil market; however, unfortu-

nately, Mr. Speaker, we are currently behind our European counterparts in our ability to recycle this product.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will help conserve energy and protect the environment by providing a Federal strategy to re-refine lubricating oil that can be used in all different types of gas and diesel engines.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague from the Energy and Commerce Committee, Mrs. BROOKS from Indiana, for sponsoring this bipartisan bill, and I urge all my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS), who is a member of the committee and the author of this bill.

□ 1345

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in favor of H.R. 1733.

Like many Hoosiers, I believe in the value of recycling and the benefits it brings to Indiana and our country. This bill would help us understand how we can better recycle lubricating oil.

H.R. 1733 requires a 2006 study mandated by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 be updated to reflect current information about the benefits or re-refined lubricating oil and how its production and use could be increased in the country.

Re-refining removes contaminants from the oil and blends additives to restore the oil to its original effectiveness. Used oil can be re-refined infinitely and is suitable for use in many types of gas and diesel engines. In fact, the Federal Government already requires re-refined oil to be used within many agencies' vehicle fleets and many State and local governments require its use as well.

Ensuring that Congress has up-to-date data on the value of recycled oil will allow legislators to make smarter decisions when developing environmental and energy policies moving forward. By updating this study, companies across the country that produce re-refined oil, like Indiana's own Crystal Clean, will have a better understanding of the latest trends regarding this product and how they can better anticipate the needs of the Federal Government.

I am proud to say that Members on both sides of the aisle supported this bill when it passed through the Energy and Commerce Committee because it is environmentally conscious and supports an all-of-the-above energy strategy.

I thank my colleague, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) for his continued support on this bill, and the Ranking Member on the Energy Subcommittee, Mr. RUSH, as we introduced this together earlier this year to move this through committee.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this measure.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I would remind my colleagues that this is a bipartisan bill. I would like to think we can pass this on a voice vote. I, again, commend the gentlewoman from Indiana, our committee, and the staff for getting this done. We hope that the Senate will take it up soon.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1733.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROMOTING HYDROPOWER DEVELOPMENT AT EXISTING NONPOWERED DAMS ACT

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2872) to amend the Federal Power Act to promote hydropower development at existing nonpowered dams, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2872

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Promoting Hydropower Development at Existing Nonpowered Dams Act".

SEC. 2. PROMOTING HYDROPOWER DEVELOPMENT AT EXISTING NONPOWERED DAMS.

Part I of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 792 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"SEC. 34. PROMOTING HYDROPOWER DEVELOPMENT AT EXISTING NONPOWERED DAMS.

"(a) EXPEDITED LICENSING PROCESS FOR NON-FEDERAL HYDROPOWER PROJECTS AT EXISTING NONPOWERED DAMS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—As provided in this section, the Commission may issue and amend licenses and preliminary permits, as appropriate, for any facility the Commission determines is a qualifying facility.

"(2) RULE.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this section, the Commission shall issue a rule establishing an expedited process for issuing and amending licenses and preliminary permits for qualifying facilities under this section.

"(3) INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE.—In establishing the expedited process under this section, the Commission shall convene an interagency task force, with appropriate Federal and State agencies and Indian tribes represented, to coordinate the regulatory processes associated with the authorizations required to construct and operate a qualifying facility.

"(4) LENGTH OF PROCESS.—The Commission shall ensure that the expedited process under this section will result in a final decision on an

application for a license by not later than 2 years after receipt of a completed application for the license.

"(b) DAM SAFETY.—

"(1) ASSESSMENT.—Before issuing any license for a qualifying facility, the Commission shall assess the safety of existing non-Federal dams and other non-Federal structures related to the qualifying facility (including possible consequences associated with failure of such structures).

"(2) REQUIREMENTS.—In issuing any license for a qualifying facility, the Commission shall ensure that the Commission's dam safety requirements apply to such qualifying facility, and the associated qualifying nonpowered dam, over the term of such license.

"(c) INTERAGENCY COMMUNICATIONS.—Interagency cooperation in the preparation of environmental documents under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) with respect to an application for a license for a qualifying facility under this section, and interagency communications relating to licensing process coordination pursuant to this section, shall not—

"(1) be considered to be ex parte communications under Commission rules; or

"(2) preclude an agency from participating in a licensing proceeding under this part.

"(d) IDENTIFICATION OF NONPOWERED DAMS FOR HYDROPOWER DEVELOPMENT.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of this section, the Commission, with the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Secretary of Agriculture, shall jointly develop a list of existing nonpowered Federal dams that the Commission and the Secretaries agree have the greatest potential for non-Federal hydropower development.

"(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In developing the list under paragraph (1), the Commission and the Secretaries may consider the following:

"(A) The compatibility of hydropower generation with existing purposes of the dam.

"(B) The proximity of the dam to existing transmission resources.

"(C) The existence of studies to characterize environmental, cultural, and historic resources relating to the dam.

"(D) The effects of hydropower development on release or flow operations of the dam.

"(3) AVAILABILITY.—The Commission shall—

"(A) provide the list developed under paragraph (1) to—

"(i) the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Committee on Natural Resources, of the House of Representatives; and

"(ii) the Committee on Environment and Public Works, and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, of the Senate; and

"(B) make such list available to the public.

"(e) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section:

"(1) QUALIFYING CRITERIA.—The term 'qualifying criteria' means, with respect to a facility—

"(A) as of the date of enactment of this section, the facility is not licensed under, or exempted from the license requirements contained in, this part;

"(B) the facility will be associated with a qualifying nonpowered dam;

"(C) the facility will be constructed, operated, and maintained for the generation of electric power;

"(D) the facility will use for such generation any withdrawals, diversions, releases, or flows from the associated qualifying nonpowered dam, including its associated impoundment or other infrastructure; and

"(E) the operation of the facility will not result in any material change to the storage, release, or flow operations of the associated qualifying nonpowered dam.

"(2) QUALIFYING FACILITY.—The term 'qualifying facility' means a facility that is deter-

mined under this section to meet the qualifying criteria.

"(3) QUALIFYING NONPOWERED DAM.—The term 'qualifying nonpowered dam' means any dam, dike, embankment, or other barrier—

"(A) the construction of which was completed on or before the date of enactment of this section;

"(B) that is or was operated for the control, release, or distribution of water for agricultural, municipal, navigational, industrial, commercial, environmental, recreational, aesthetic, drinking water, or flood control purposes; and

"(C) that, as of the date of enactment of this section, is not generating electricity with hydropower generating works that are licensed under, or exempted from the license requirements contained in, this part."

SEC. 3. OBLIGATION FOR PAYMENT OF ANNUAL CHARGES.

Section 10(e) of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 803(e)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(5) Any obligation of a licensee for payment of annual charges under this subsection shall commence when the construction of the applicable facility commences."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material in the RECORD on the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this bill, H.R. 2872, was introduced by Energy and Commerce Committee member LARRY BUCSHON in June of this year. The legislation went through regular order and was reported by the full committee with a bipartisan amendment by a voice vote.

This bill promotes hydropower by development at existing nonpowered dams by establishing an expedited licensing process that will result in a final decision on an application in 2 years or less. We know hydropower is a clean, renewable, and reliable source of energy that provides low-cost electricity to millions of Americans.

As we have learned through hearings at the Energy and Commerce Committee, the current regulatory process places new hydropower projects at existing nonpowered dams at a significant disadvantage. The current process takes way too long and it creates too much uncertainty, burdening consumers with additional unnecessary costs and preventing jobs and economic opportunities.

This bill, H.R. 2872, makes important changes to the process to enable FERC to issue a decision in 2 years or less. The legislation also requires that FERC, as well as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of the

Interior, to develop a list of existing nonpowered Federal dams that have the greatest potential for non-Federal hydropower development.

This is a good bipartisan bill. I thank Dr. BUCSHON for his hard work on this important issue and for working with our colleagues across the aisle to bring the bill to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSE OF REP-
RESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, December 12, 2017.

Hon. GREG WALDEN,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN WALDEN: I write concerning H.R. 2872, the Promoting Hydropower Development at Existing Nonpowered Dams Act. This legislation includes matters that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

I recognize and appreciate your desire to bring this legislation before the House of Representatives in an expeditious manner, and accordingly, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will forego action on the bill. However, this is conditional on our mutual understanding that foregoing consideration of the bill does not prejudice the Committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation that fall within the Committee's Rule X jurisdiction. Lastly, should a conference on the bill be necessary, I request your support for the appointment of conferees from the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure during any House-Senate conference convened on this or related legislation.

I would ask that a copy of this letter and your response acknowledging our jurisdictional interest be included in the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor, to memorialize our understanding.

I look forward to working with the Committee on Energy and Commerce as the bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE,
Washington, DC, December 12, 2017.

Hon. BILL SHUSTER,
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SHUSTER: Thank you for your letter concerning H.R. 2872, Promoting Hydropower Development at Existing Nonpowered Dams Act.

I appreciate your committee's willingness to forego action on H.R. 2872 so that this legislation may be brought before the House of Representatives in an expeditious manner. I agree that foregoing consideration of the bill does not prejudice your committee with respect to the appointment of conferees or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation that fall within your committee's Rule X jurisdiction. In addition, should a conference on the bill be necessary, I will support your request for the appropriate appointment of conferees from the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure during any House-Senate conference convened on this or related legislation.

I will place a copy of your letter and this response into the Congressional Record dur-

ing consideration of the measure on the House floor.

Sincerely,

GREG WALDEN,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, December 12, 2017.

Hon. GREG WALDEN,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write concerning H.R. 2872, Promoting Hydropower Development at Existing Nonpowered Dams Act. The bill contains provisions within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Natural Resources Committee.

In the interest of permitting you to proceed expeditiously to floor consideration of this very important bill, the Committee foregoes further consideration of the bill. I do so with the understanding that the Natural Resources Committee does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matter contained in the bill that fall within its Rule X jurisdiction. I also request that you support my request to name members of the Natural Resources Committee to any conference committee to consider such provisions. Finally, please place this letter into the committee report on H.R. 2872 and into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor.

Thank you for the cooperative spirit in which you and your staff have worked regarding this matter and others between our respective committees.

Sincerely,

ROB BISHOP,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE,
Washington, DC, December 12, 2017.

Hon. ROB BISHOP,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BISHOP: Thank you for your letter concerning H.R. 2872, Promoting Hydropower Development at Existing Nonpowered Dams Act.

I appreciate your willingness to forgo action on the bill so that it can proceed expeditiously to floor consideration. I agree that the Natural Resources Committee does not waive any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matter contained in the bill that fall within its Rule X jurisdiction. I will support your request to name members of the Natural Resources Committee to any conference committee to consider such provisions. Finally, I will place this letter into the Congressional Record during consideration of the measure on the House floor.

Sincerely,

GREG WALDEN,
Chairman.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2872, the Promoting Hydropower Development at Existing Nonpowered Dams Act.

Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague from the Energy and Commerce Committee, Mr. BUCSHON from Indiana, for sponsoring this bipartisan piece of legislation. I would also like to acknowledge the committee staffs from both the majority and minority sides for working together in good faith to develop a bill that resolved the differences between the two sides as we proceeded through the committee proc-

ess in order to get the bill onto the floor here today.

Mr. Speaker, I am a huge proponent of hydropower as a safe, reliable, carbon-free way of providing energy to millions of Americans, especially when the licensing process is conducted in a reasonable and transparent manner that takes into account environmental safeguards as well as the rights and interests of the affected local communities.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that H.R. 2872 encompasses all of these objections. H.R. 2872 would allow FERC, in consultation with Federal and State resource agencies, as well as Native American Tribes, to establish an expedited licensing process for installing hydropower generation at existing dams that don't produce electricity by exempting these projects from regulation under the Federal Power Act.

Mr. Speaker, under this bill, FERC would be required to provide a final decision on license applications within 2 years of receiving a completed application for new generation projects at nonpowered dams that are completely constructed as of the date of the bill's enactment and which aren't generating electricity through hydropower. Eligible projects, Mr. Speaker, must not result in any material change to the storage, release, or flow operations of the dam.

H.R. 2872 would also require FERC to establish an interagency task force, consisting of relevant Federal and State agencies, as well as Native American Tribes, that would all coordinate the authorizations necessary to license the facility.

FERC would also be required to gauge the safety of non-Federal dams under consideration and to require the facility to meet the Commission's dam safety requirements throughout the term of the license.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, FERC would work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as well as the Interior and Agriculture Departments, to develop a list of existing nonpowered federally owned dams with the greatest potential for non-Federal hydropower development.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2872 would exempt hydropower applicants from having to pay annual fees associated with the licenses until construction actually commences on the project.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2872 represents a major step in the right direction for increasing our ability to issue hydropower permits in a fair, transparent, and expedited way, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this notable bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I appreciate the gentleman's willingness to work on these bills together. I really appreciate his hard work.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON), the sponsor of this legislation, in support of this bill.

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Whether it is turning on the light above the kitchen table in a home or powering heavy machinery in a factory, the American people expect there to be reliable and affordable energy to power their lives and our economy. That is why it is important that we take advantage of all forms of American-made energy.

According to Department of Energy estimates, there are more than 50,000 suitable nonpowered dams across the country that collectively have the technical potential to add 12 gigawatts of hydropower capacity. To put that in context, that is the same potential capacity as two dozen coal-fired power plants.

Back home in Indiana, there are six nonpowered dams located in the Eighth District that could benefit from an expedited permitting process that promotes hydropower generation and provides quality Hoosier jobs.

Unfortunately, unnecessary government red tape is preventing us from taking advantage of clean, renewable energy from hydropower at existing nonpowered dams. The current regulatory process simply takes too long, taking up to a decade to approve a project, which stifles the investment needed to bring additional capacity at existing dams online.

We have the opportunity to change this with H.R. 2872, the Promoting Hydropower Development at Existing Nonpowered Dams Act. Specifically, this legislation cuts through the red tape and instructs FERC to create an expedited permitting process that will result in a final decision on an application in just 2 years or less.

Streamlining the permitting process for qualifying nonpowered dam projects represents an important first step in modernizing our existing infrastructure. Additionally, it will incentivize investments in clean hydropower development, allowing us to take advantage of an American source of energy.

I applaud both sides of the aisle for their work to reach a bipartisan solution, and I ask my colleagues to support H.R. 2872.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LOEBSACK), an outstanding member of the subcommittee.

Mr. LOEBSACK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2872, the Promoting Hydropower Development at Existing Nonpowered Dams Act.

Iowa has become a national leader in renewable energy. Currently, my State provides over 40 percent of its electricity from renewable sources, including over 37 percent from wind power alone. But there is a lot of potential.

In 2012, the U.S. Department of Energy found that there is over 12,000 megawatts of untapped hydropower po-

tential in the Nation's existing dams. That is enough electricity to power 4 million homes. That same report ranked Iowa 10th in available energy capacity in the United States if these nonpowered dams were converted, with the potential to generate 427 megawatts.

□ 1400

Renewable energy development like hydropower has created thousands of good-paying jobs across Iowa. My district is the home of three hydroelectric generation plants and will soon be the home of the second largest hydro plant in the State, the Red Rock Hydroelectric Project. Upon completion, Red Rock will produce upwards of 36 megawatts of energy. That is enough electricity to power the nearby city of Pella, and it has led to hundreds of jobs across the State of Iowa.

However, projects like Red Rock and others have been slowed by a cumbersome licensing process as has been mentioned by folks on both sides of the aisle here. Congress must work to streamline the hydropower licensing processes so that more clean, renewable energy and domestic energy can be brought onto the grid for the American consumer, while also ensuring that these projects do not harm the environment. This is why I am proud to have worked with Mr. BUCSHON and my colleagues on the Energy and Commerce Committee to bring this commonsense, job-creating, bipartisan legislation to the floor today.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN), the chairman of the full committee.

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their great work on this: Mr. RUSH from Illinois and, of course, the former chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, my friend, Mr. UPTON, and our other committee members who put so much into these important pieces of legislation.

To date, the committee has worked in a bipartisan manner to examine and advance thoughtful solutions that prioritize consumers, support American businesses and jobs, and protect the environment. These commonsense, bipartisan bills we are considering today continue this very strong and bipartisan effort.

As many of you have heard me discuss before, hydropower plays an integral role in electricity generation across our great country as well as in my home State of Oregon. In fact, nearly 43 percent of electricity in Oregon comes from this dependable base load power resource, and it has supported jobs along the Columbia River and throughout the State.

Two of the three bills under consideration today build upon the committee's work promoting this emissions-free energy resource. In fact, the House of

Representatives has already passed 10 Energy and Commerce Committee bills that promote hydropower and modernize the licensing process so we can get these projects to market faster.

H.R. 2872, the Promoting Hydropower Development at Existing Nonpowered Dams Act, is authored by my good friend from Indiana and committee member, LARRY BUCSHON. Dr. BUCSHON's legislation would promote hydropower development by expediting the licensing process for these types of facilities: dams that could have hydropower put on them, but don't right now. We want to take advantage of that power.

H.R. 2872 also requires the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Department of the Interior to develop a list of existing nonpowered Federal dam facilities across the country that have the greatest potential for non-Federal hydropower development.

What we want to know is: Where are these dams already in existence so we can put a generator on, in effect, and generate electricity and create electricity without emission?

The second hydropower bill under consideration was authored by our distinguished Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee vice chairman, MORGAN GRIFFITH, from Virginia. Now, Mr. GRIFFITH's bill, H.R. 2880, the Promoting Closed-Loop Pumped Storage Hydropower Act, unanimously passed the committee last week. This promotes what is called closed-loop pumped storage hydropower development by streamlining the licensing for such facilities.

Fundamentally, what happens is you generate power; and, when there is surplus power, it pumps, puts water on top of a reservoir, and then when you need to generate energy at peak times, the water comes back down through a pipe, through another generator, back into a lower elevation reservoir, and you repeat the cycle. It just really acts like a battery in some respects and produces, again, emissions, free hydropower.

The third bill under consideration today was authored by our committee member Representative SUSAN BROOKS from Indiana, H.R. 1733. Now, this directs the Secretary of Energy to update the Federal strategy for recycling used lubricating oil.

Recycling used lubricating oil provides environmental benefits, reduces energy consumption, which is important, and produces high-quality products for consumers across our country.

Mr. Speaker, cumulatively, these bills underscore the Energy and Commerce Committee's willingness to reach across the aisle and work together in a bipartisan way to find commonsense solutions that make a difference for people across the country that improve the environment and generate emissions-free energy.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues and the staff on both sides of the committee for their great work in this case.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support these measures and get them to the President's desk.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I, too, have no further speakers.

Mr. Speaker, I again commend members on both sides of the aisle for getting this bill to the floor, and the staff. I appreciate the leadership for scheduling this, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2872, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROMOTING CLOSED-LOOP PUMPED STORAGE HYDROPOWER ACT

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2880) to amend the Federal Power Act to promote closed-loop pumped storage hydropower, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2880

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Promoting Closed-Loop Pumped Storage Hydropower Act".

SEC. 2. CLOSED-LOOP PUMPED STORAGE PROJECTS.

Part I of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 792 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"SEC. 34. CLOSED-LOOP PUMPED STORAGE PROJECTS.

"(a) EXPEDITED LICENSING PROCESS FOR CLOSED-LOOP PUMPED STORAGE PROJECTS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—As provided in this section, the Commission may issue and amend licenses and preliminary permits, as appropriate, for closed-loop pumped storage projects.

"(2) RULE.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this section, the Commission shall issue a rule establishing an expedited process for issuing and amending licenses and preliminary permits for closed-loop pumped storage projects under this section.

"(3) INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE.—In establishing the expedited process under this section, the Commission shall convene an interagency task force, with appropriate Federal and State agencies and Indian tribes represented, to coordinate the regulatory processes associated with the authorizations required to construct and operate closed-loop pumped storage projects.

"(4) LENGTH OF PROCESS.—The Commission shall ensure that the expedited process under this section will result in final decision on an application for a license by not later than 2 years after receipt of a completed application for such license.

"(b) DAM SAFETY.—Before issuing any license for a closed-loop pumped storage project, the

Commission shall assess the safety of existing dams and other structures related to the project (including possible consequences associated with failure of such structures).

"(c) EXEMPTIONS FROM OTHER REQUIREMENTS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—In issuing or amending a license or preliminary permit pursuant to the expedited process established under this section, the Commission may grant an exemption from any other requirement of this part with respect to any part of the closed-loop pumped storage project (not including any dam or other impoundment).

"(2) CONSULTATION.—In granting an exemption under paragraph (1), the Commission shall consult with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the State agency exercising administration over the fish and wildlife resources of the State in which the closed-loop pumped storage project is or will be located, in the manner provided by the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.).

"(3) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—In granting an exemption under paragraph (1), the Commission shall include in any such exemption—

"(A) such terms and conditions as the Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and the State agency described in paragraph (2) each determine are appropriate to prevent loss of, or damage to, fish and wildlife resources and to otherwise carry out the purposes of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act; and

"(B) such terms and conditions as the Commission deems appropriate to ensure that such closed-loop pumped storage project continues to comply with the provisions of this section and terms and conditions included in any such exemption.

"(4) FEES.—The Commission, in addition to the requirements of section 10(e), shall establish fees which shall be paid by an applicant for a license for a closed-loop pumped storage project that is required to meet terms and conditions set by fish and wildlife agencies under paragraph (3). Such fees shall be adequate to reimburse the fish and wildlife agencies referred to in paragraph (3) for any reasonable costs incurred in connection with any studies or other reviews carried out by such agencies for purposes of compliance with this section. The fees shall, subject to annual appropriations Acts, be transferred to such agencies by the Commission for use solely for purposes of carrying out such studies and shall remain available until expended.

"(d) TRANSFERS.—Notwithstanding section 5, and regardless of whether the holder of a preliminary permit for a closed-loop pumped storage project claimed municipal preference under section 7(a) when obtaining the permit, the Commission may, to facilitate development of a closed-loop pumped storage project—

"(1) add entities as joint permittees following issuance of a preliminary permit; and

"(2) transfer a license in part to one or more nonmunicipal entities as co-licensees with a municipality, if the municipality retains majority ownership of the project for which the license was issued.

"(e) INTERAGENCY COMMUNICATIONS.—Interagency cooperation in the preparation of environmental documents under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) with respect to an application for a license for a closed-loop pumped storage project submitted pursuant to this section, and interagency communications relating to licensing process coordination pursuant to this section, shall not—

"(1) be considered to be ex parte communications under Commission rules; or

"(2) preclude an agency from participating in a licensing proceeding under this part.

"(f) DEVELOPING ABANDONED MINES FOR PUMPED STORAGE.—

"(1) WORKSHOP.—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this section, the Commission shall hold a workshop to explore

potential opportunities for development of closed-loop pumped storage projects at abandoned mine sites.

"(2) GUIDANCE.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, the Commission shall issue guidance to assist applicants for licenses or preliminary permits for closed-loop pumped storage projects at abandoned mine sites.

"(g) QUALIFYING CRITERIA FOR CLOSED-LOOP PUMPED STORAGE PROJECTS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall establish criteria that a pumped storage project shall meet in order to qualify as a closed-loop pumped storage project eligible for the expedited process established under this section.

"(2) INCLUSIONS.—In establishing the criteria under paragraph (1), the Commission shall include criteria requiring that the pumped storage project—

"(A) cause little to no change to existing surface and groundwater flows and uses; and

"(B) is unlikely to adversely affect species listed as a threatened species or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973."

SEC. 3. OBLIGATION FOR PAYMENT OF ANNUAL CHARGES.

Section 10(e) of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 803(e)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(5) Any obligation of a licensee for payment of annual charges under this subsection shall commence when the construction of the applicable facility commences."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RUSH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material in the RECORD on the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, this bill, H.R. 2880, was introduced by Energy and Commerce Committee member MORGAN GRIFFITH in June of this year. The legislation went through regular order, and it was reported by the full committee with a bipartisan amendment by a voice vote.

The bill promotes closed-loop pumped storage hydropower projects by establishing an expedited licensing process that is going to result in a final decision on an application in 2 years or less.

We know that hydropower is a clean, renewable, and reliable source of energy that provides low-cost electricity to millions of Americans across the country. Closed-loop pumped storage is different than conventional hydro. These types of projects move water between two reservoirs located at different elevations in order to store energy and then generate that electricity.

As we have learned through hearings at the Energy and Commerce Committee, the complete regulatory process places new pumped storage hydropower projects at a significant disadvantage.

Pumped storage hydro has been around for almost 100 years, but with more intermittent renewables coming online, the need for grid-scale storage is more important than ever. The current process to license pumped storage takes way too long and creates too much uncertainty, burdening consumers with additional unnecessary costs and preventing jobs and economic opportunities.

This bill makes important changes to the process to enable FERC to issue a decision in 2 years or less. The legislation also requires FERC to hold a workshop to explore potential opportunities for development of closed-loop pumped storage projects at abandoned mine sites.

This bill is a good, bipartisan bill. I thank Mr. GRIFFITH for his hard work on this important issue and for working with our colleagues across the aisle to bring this bill to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2880, the Promoting Closed-Loop Pumped Storage Hydropower Act.

Mr. Speaker, as I have stated many times before, I am a strong supporter of hydropower, which provides clean, renewable, carbon-free, reliable energy for millions of American businesses and households. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I must commend my Energy and Commerce Committee colleague Mr. GRIFFIN from Virginia for sponsoring this important, bipartisan piece of legislation. I must also applaud the work of the committee staff from both sides of the aisle for their tireless work in negotiating a bill that I believe all Members can fully support.

Mr. Speaker, closed-loop pump hydroelectric storage facilities operate in a capacity similar to batteries in that when there is a surplus of energy, water is pumped to an upper reservoir, and when more energy is needed, that water can then be released to produce electricity through the use of turbines.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2880 would require FERC to create an expedited licensing process for closed-loop pumped storage projects within 2 years of receiving a completed application. FERC would also be required to issue a rule establishing the new process within 180 days of this bill's enactment.

Mr. Speaker, in order to ensure local stakeholder input and collaboration, FERC will establish an interagency task force representing Federal and State agencies, as well as Native American Tribes, that would coordinate the authorizations needed to license the facility.

H.R. 2880, Mr. Speaker, would also direct FERC to evaluate the safety of

any dam or other existing structure that would be associated with a project and specify that potential projects could not cause significant changes to surface and groundwater uses or adversely impact threatened or endangered species.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2880 would, for the first time, allow additional entities, including private partners, to join as co-licensees with municipalities in order to take advantage of the municipal preference. That preference would continue for such a private-public partnership even at the point that the municipality does not retain a majority interest in the project.

H.R. 2880, Mr. Speaker, also mandates FERC to hold a workshop and issue guidance within 6 months of enactment to assist license applicants for closed-loop pumped storage projects at abandoned mine sites. Mr. Speaker, this provision would allow for these abandoned mines, many of which may already have the infrastructure in place to accommodate these projects, to be repurposed, potentially putting unemployed mining communities back to work.

So, Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2880 is a much-needed, bipartisan, critical piece of legislation that would help to increase the number of low-carbon hydropower projects, while also taking into account the needs and interests of impacted local stakeholders. I strongly support this bill, Mr. Speaker, and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1415

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GRIFFITH), the author of the bill.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman WALDEN and Chairman UPTON for their cooperation and input. The teams on both sides of the aisle, the chairman of the full committee, and the chairman of the subcommittee have worked really hard to advance this important bill, and I thank them.

Hydropower is an essential component of an all-of-the-above energy strategy. We have a tremendous opportunity to expand renewable hydropower production. However, without some much-needed licensing improvements, we risk losing investment opportunities in new hydropower infrastructure.

In particular, closed-loop pumped storage hydro projects offer the opportunity to store energy for use when it is needed. In essence, it is a giant natural battery. H.R. 2880, the Promoting Closed-Loop Pumped Storage Hydropower Act, establishes an expedited licensing process for these projects.

This bill cuts unnecessary red tape that currently accompanies approval of these projects, hindering energy security and job creation.

I am excited about the possibility that some are exploring to build these facilities in abandoned mines and/or the coal fields of central Appalachia. As a part of this, H.R. 2880 also requires FERC to hold a workshop to explore the potential opportunities for development of closed-loop projects in abandoned mine sites.

I am hopeful this will be a real benefit to our coal field regions in the form of jobs, economic development, and energy security; and I am proud of what we are doing here in an effort to make this happen.

If we can repurpose some of these mines or bring jobs in to central Appalachia that don't currently exist, it is an energy region and it is a region that understands the energy issues, and as people want to get rid of coal—I support keeping coal—but all of the above requires we also do hydropower.

I urge my colleagues to help us create new jobs in these regions by supporting this bipartisan, commonsense legislation promoting closed-loop hydropower development.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS), another notable outstanding member of the subcommittee.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I also thank Mr. GRIFFITH for introducing the Promoting Closed-Loop Pumped Storage Hydropower Act. He did valuable work to make this the bipartisan version we see today.

More electricity from hydropower is key to meeting our clean energy goals, to reducing harmful emissions that pollute our air and water and contribute to climate change.

Hydropower is one of the few carbon-free energy sources that provides a steady baseload of electricity. This bill will give closed-loop hydropower projects an expedited process for approval from FERC. It will consider interagency input through a new task force and provide appropriate protection for wildlife and endangered species while helping us grow emissions-free energy.

These closed-loop projects often integrate other forms of renewable energy, like solar, to develop a power generation cycle that is clean, secure, and reliable.

In San Diego, where large rivers and typical hydropower generation are less common, closed-loop pumped storage hydropower offers an innovative solution and can have other benefits to the region's energy and reservoir systems.

In my district, the Lake Hodges Pumped Storage Project has provided clean energy since 2012, and a new project at the San Vicente Reservoir is being considered now.

We must consider to have productive bipartisan conversations like these that produce the ultimate goal of streamlining the regulatory process so that hydropower projects can be approved more quickly while still meeting high environmental standards.

I would also like to thank Energy and Commerce Committee leadership and staff for helping advance this bill to the floor, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers on this side, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers either.

Again, I want to commend my colleagues for pushing this legislation, for working with both sides of the aisle. Again, my congrats to my counterpart, my ranking member on the Energy Subcommittee, and all my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to vote "yes," and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. UPTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2880, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXTENDING AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT TELEWORK TRAVEL EXPENSES TEST PROGRAMS

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4171) to amend title 5, United States Code, to extend the authority to conduct telework travel expenses test programs, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4171

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT TELEWORK TRAVEL EXPENSES TEST PROGRAMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 5711(g) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking "7 years after the date of the enactment of the Telework Enhancement Act of 2010" and inserting "on December 31, 2020".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect as though enacted on December 1, 2017.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Montana (Mr. GIANFORTE) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. DEMINGS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Montana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Montana?

There was no objection.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4171, a bill I introduced with Congressman CONNOLLY, to extend Federal agencies' authority to conduct a telework pilot program.

The Telework Enhancement Act of 2010 provided Federal agencies, and specifically the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, with the authority to conduct a pilot program to incentivize telework. The pilot program allows agencies to waive the reimbursement of travel costs for teleworking employees who return to headquarters for mandatory training programs.

Both agencies and employees benefit from this arrangement. Agencies benefit from having an additional tool for recruitment and retention. Agencies also realize cost savings by allowing employees to work at different locations.

For example, according to the USPTO, its telework program saved \$77.4 million in fiscal year 2016 alone. The savings are related to lower real estate costs and increased personnel retention.

In turn, teleworking employees can work from almost anywhere in the United States. The teleworking program moves USPTO employees into the communities that they serve. For example, in my State of Montana, the pilot program allowed the USPTO to place patent examiners in Bozeman, Butte, Billings, and Missoula.

Teleworking can grow opportunities in our communities that aren't close to highly populated areas that house Federal agencies. It has the promise of bringing more good-paying jobs to Montana and other rural areas across the country.

Now that agencies are seeing the cost savings associated with telework, this pilot program can be wound down. Absent congressional action, this program expired last week. However, the USPTO has requested an extension in order to allow it to budget for increased travel expenses related to paying for employees to return to agency headquarters in northern Virginia or one of its regional offices. This bill extends the program for 3 years.

I thank the congressman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY), for working with me in a bipartisan fashion to bring this bill to the floor. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Representative GIANFORTE and Representative CONNOLLY for their work on this bipartisan bill to extend the authority for agencies to conduct telework pilot programs for travel expenses. The current authority for this program expired on December 9 of this year, so passage of this bill is urgently needed. The bill extends the program until December 13 of 2020.

In February of 2012, the United States Patent and Trademark Office

used this authority to initiate the Telework Enhancement Act Pilot Program. This program allows USPTO employees to work throughout the country and waives the requirement that the agency pay their travel costs for mandatory trips back to its headquarters.

According to the USPTO, the program significantly expanded the agency's teleworking workforce and allowed it to hire and retain a highly skilled workforce. The USPTO also estimates that this program has saved the agency more than \$77 million in fiscal year 2016, including \$17 million in avoided real estate costs and nearly \$32 million in reduced recruitment expenses.

The agency also cites increased productivity, work hours, employee morale, and decreased environmental impacts as benefits of the pilot. Given its benefits, it makes sense to authorize an extension of this pilot program.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD a letter that the Oversight Committee received from The National Treasury Employees Union yesterday supporting the bill.

THE NATIONAL TREASURY
EMPLOYEES UNION,
December 11, 2017.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: As National President of the National Treasury Employees Union, representing over 150,000 federal employees in 31 different agencies, I am writing to express NTEU's views on HR 4171, a bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to extend the authority to conduct telework travel expenses test programs, which is scheduled to be considered by the House tomorrow.

NTEU represents the trademark attorneys at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO). The enhanced telework program has allowed employees to work and live in various communities across the nation, saving PTO office property costs and reducing employee turnover. We support the bipartisan legislation for a short-term extension of the pilot, which we believe has been a success for both the PTO and employees. We believe, with the expiration of this new extension, that the agency will have the experience to be able to allow national telework while covering employee travel costs.

Sincerely,

ANTHONY M. REARDON,
National President.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I would make the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. DEMINGS) aware that I have no further speakers and I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentlewoman from Florida and the author of the legislation and manager for their leadership on this issue as members of the Oversight Committee and indicate that I rise to support H.R. 4171.

I am a member of the Judiciary Committee and have worked very hard on patent and trade issues, and particularly the patent office, and I see this as

raising the caliber of opportunity of different types of employees, which are very important. The patent office is a skilled entity, and clearly, this gives a greater opportunity for those individuals to work in places beyond Washington, D.C.

I also think it is important to note that telework is advancing, and it should not be considered less work than anyone who is at an office. I would hope that, as we look at legislation dealing with telework, that telework would not diminish the benefits that an employee gets and they would not be distinguished because they are working at home, if it was allowed, versus in an office.

So I think this is an important responsibility of the Oversight Committee, and clearly, I rise to support that. Keeping in mind that the House Judiciary Committee and the House Oversight Committee have worked together on a number of issues, I might just comment on, I think, an element that needs the cooperation of the Judiciary Committee as well.

I think, today, many of us heard of a statement being offered by the Oval Office. I would like to read part of it into the RECORD. It deals with the standards of accountability and protocol and decorum. It was sent by the Oval Office.

"Lightweight Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, a total flunky for Chuck Schumer and someone who would come to my office 'begging' for campaign contributions not so long ago (and would do anything for them), is now in the ring fighting against . . ."—I will just say the Oval Office.

This requires oversight of the appropriate committees because it is a question of protocol, dignity of the office.

I would offer to say, as a woman, I am outraged that these comments were made. I don't know what it means to say "would do anything." We all know that we do not have public finance, and members of various parties and levels of government raise fundraising dollars to communicate to their constituents. I would imagine that they go to any number of individuals who live in their State.

□ 1430

I think that Senator GILLIBRAND obviously went to an individual who lived in her State, but to silence a sitting Senator on her expression of outrage over treatment of women and to utilize a theme that has been used for decades regarding how women rise—this is the larger question, how women rise.

Are they Ph.D.'s? Are they law enforcement? Are they secretaries or doctors? Are they teachers? Are they in businesses in Hollywood? Are they in aviation? How do they rise?

This squarely talks about, overall, all women and, frankly, I think it is important, in an oversight capacity, that the women who have asked to be heard as it relates to issues of the Oval Office should be heard, as all, in a process of combining committees, such as

Oversight and Judiciary. That is our appropriate protocol.

All that I have said, I have always said that these issues should be allowed the appropriate investigation and due process, and that, I think, would be what the American people would want us to do.

So I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. I could not be on the floor, and I would be remiss, if I did not bring to the attention of my colleagues the dastardly comment that does not fit the office and, really, characterizes women, American women, since this is an issue and a statement made here in the United States, characterizes women in a highly inappropriate manner; and a professional colleague in an equal branch of government to be castigated by the Oval Office, I think an apology is warranted.

But I think an investigation is warranted for those women who have made allegations who have yet, to date, been heard, and I might add, they have yet, to date, been sued, so they have not had their day in court to be able to answer any such allegations.

I hope that our respective chairpersons and committees will investigate this in the most appropriate way forward.

And any woman that is of a generation of this time, millennials or other women, have had the allegations made against them that the only way they have risen is because they have acted in a certain manner, I don't think that that is appropriate and appropriate decorum.

With that, I support this legislation. I look forward to the answer to our request for full hearings on these women who have to have their say and to be heard regarding the protocols of the Oval Office.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman and Members of the body are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities against Members of the Senate.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I have no additional speakers. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Montana (Mr. GIANFORTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4171, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONVERSE VETERANS POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1208) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service lo-

cated at 9155 Schaefer Road, Converse, Texas, as the "Converse Veterans Post Office Building".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1208

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. CONVERSE VETERANS POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 9155 Schaefer Road, Converse, Texas, shall be known and designated as the "Converse Veterans Post Office Building".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Converse Veterans Post Office Building".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Montana (Mr. GIANFORTE) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. DEMINGS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Montana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Montana?

There was no objection.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1208, introduced by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR). The bill names the United States Post Office at 9155 Schaefer Road in Converse, Texas, after the veterans from Converse, Texas, for their service to this Nation.

I look forward to hearing more about the brave exploits of the Converse veterans from my colleague and the bill's sponsor, Representative HENRY CUELLAR.

In the meantime, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues in consideration of H.R. 1208, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Post Office located at 9155 Schaefer Road in Converse, Texas, as the Converse Veterans Post Office Building.

Every day, brave men and women in our military make great sacrifices to defend this Nation and protect our freedom. While we can never repay them for their service, naming the Converse Post Office in their honor is the least we can do.

Mr. Speaker, we should pass this bill and name this post office so that we might recognize the selfless service of

our veterans and honor the sacrifices they have made for this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I, too, urge the passage of H.R. 1208, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make the gentlewoman from Florida aware that I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR).

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Florida for yielding and for her leadership on this issue dealing with veterans.

I also want to thank my friend from Montana for his leadership in support of veterans across the Nation.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I rise to present H.R. 1208, which will rename the post office facility in my district as the Converse Veterans Post Office Building.

Across my district, I have fine men and women of all walks of life that have honorably served our country. It is critical that we honor their service and their dedication to our Nation.

Converse alone is home to over 3,000 veterans, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Dedicating this post office to our veterans will serve as an enduring reminder of the sacrifices that our friends, our neighbors, our families have made while serving their country. These individuals put country ahead of self, and I am proud to recognize them with the dedicating of this post office facility.

Today, I want to acknowledge one sacrifice from one individual; that is an individual from Converse, Texas, a veteran by the name of Quintin E. Cain. Mr. Cain served 23 years in the Army as a medic, where he would receive numerous medals and recognitions.

After being honorably discharged, he continued to serve the country, his country, by using the medical training that he had to train combat medic students as a civilian. We owe our freedom to veterans such as Mr. Cain, which is why I am recognizing him and, of course, the other veterans, by dedicating this post office. He is just one example of many veterans who have made countless sacrifices for their country in the face of danger.

The bravery and the commitment of our veterans to our Nation demonstrates what it really means to be an American, the essence of being an American.

I would also like to take a moment to thank the veterans organizations throughout my district for their tireless work in providing care to our veterans when they need it. There are good men and women who work hard and provide that care to our veterans. Let us remember and express gratitude to these courageous people, the veterans, their families, as well as their care providers.

In the words of President John F. Kennedy, when he said, "A nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces, but also by the men it honors and the men it remembers"—and I would like to add, and women also—correct President John F. Kennedy.

This bill allows us to show our appreciation for the veterans, the men and women of Converse, Texas, and across the Nation, and make sure that their service and sacrifice to our country is not forgotten.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Montana (Mr. GIANFORTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1208.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SERGEANT JOHN BASILONE POST OFFICE

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2815) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 30 East Somerset Street in Raritan, New Jersey, as the "Sergeant John Basilone Post Office".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2815

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SERGEANT JOHN BASILONE POST OFFICE.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 30 East Somerset Street in Raritan, New Jersey, shall be known and designated as the "Sergeant John Basilone Post Office".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Sergeant John Basilone Post Office".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Montana (Mr. GIANFORTE) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. DEMINGS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Montana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Montana?

There was no objection.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2815, introduced by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LANCE). The bill names the United States Post Office at 30 East Somerset Street in Raritan, New Jersey, after Sergeant John Basilone.

Sergeant Basilone was among the first wave of marines to storm the shores of Iwo Jima on February 19, 1945. I thank Representative LANCE for introducing this bill to pay tribute to the life and sacrifice of Sergeant Basilone.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LANCE) to explain his bill.

Mr. LANCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an American hero and a proud son of New Jersey, Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone, and I offer this bill to name the post office in Raritan, New Jersey, in his honor.

Gunnery Sergeant Basilone is an exemplar of brave service in our Armed Forces, and a member of the Greatest Generation, whose collective bravery and selflessness won World War II and liberated millions from oppression.

In Congress, there are many actions we take to honor and remember those who serve our Nation. These commendations matter. Younger generations ask whose name is inscribed on monuments and flag posts or on Federal properties; and in retelling these stories, we inspire young Americans to appreciate the generations that came before in public service.

Sergeant Basilone, indeed, has a tremendous story. Born on November 4, 1916, in Buffalo, New York, he was 1 of 10 siblings born to Salvatore and Dora Basilone. His father, an immigrant from Italy, and his mother, a native of Manville, New Jersey, decided to raise their family in the Somerset County, New Jersey, Borough of Raritan.

At just barely 18 years of age, a young Basilone decided to enlist in the United States Army in the 1930s. He would begin his military career with a tour of the Philippines.

In the Army, he was popular, extremely well-liked. He boxed and contributed to a sense of camaraderie that put the young men who were a world away from home at ease. He would later be honorably discharged from the Army and return home.

But in 1940, the trumpet summoned him again, and he re-enlisted, this time in the Marines. He would be dispatched to the height of battle in the Pacific theater.

Sergeant Basilone and many fellow marines were part of Operation Watchtower to regain territory in Guadalcanal, the site of a Japanese airfield. On August 7, 1942, the group took the airfield and defended it bravely from Japanese attempts to reconquer the territory.

In October of 1942, the Japanese began another land attack to regain control of Guadalcanal. Sergeant Basilone fought bravely for 2 days and

ultimately contributed to the annihilation of a considerable portion of the Japanese regiment.

In a moment of selfless service to his fellow marines, Sergeant Basilone endured brutal enemy fire during the assault to assist nearby machine gunners in trouble.

Seeing the immediate danger, he killed eight encroaching Japanese soldiers and quickly provided aid and equipment to the pinned marines. He saved many lives that day and, in later testimony, his fellow marines credited Sergeant Basilone's gallantry and heroic conduct for saving their lives, actions that would earn him the Medal of Honor in recognition of his actions at Guadalcanal.

□ 1445

Sergeant Basilone would return home for a short time, selling war bonds to continue doing what he could for the country he loved and the work of which he was so proud.

However, staying stateside was not where he wanted to be. He volunteered to go back to the Pacific. Before he left Camp Pendleton and returned to battle, he married Lena Mae Riggi on July 10, 1944.

One of Gunnery Sergeant Basilone's greatest traits was his tremendous regard for the safety of his fellow warriors. He could not let the narrow escape in Guadalcanal happen again, so he worked diligently to train recruits on proper machine-gun use. His trainees became known as the Basilone Boys.

One of his recruits, William Douglas Lansford, spoke of the pride and confidence Gunnery Sergeant Basilone instilled in him. "We wanted to be just like him," Lansford was known to have said.

While he could have remained stateside at home with his new wife, he insisted on staying with the Basilone Boys. Gunnery Sergeant Basilone and his men stormed the shores of Iwo Jima with the first wave of marines on February 19, 1945.

The Japanese returned heavy fire. Sergeant Basilone ran toward one of the block houses, the source of Japanese fire, and quickly destroyed it with grenades and demolitions. After this, he scrambled to rescue an American tank that was trapped in a minefield.

But in a moment that will forever live in our hearts, Sergeant Basilone and a handful of his fellow marines were then hit by heavy mortar fire. He died alongside the brave men who stepped forward to serve this country and the men he wanted to return to battle to protect and defend.

Thanks to his bravery and his fellow marines, the Allied Forces were able to complete the invasion. He would be awarded, posthumously, the Navy Cross, the United States Navy's highest decoration, for his sacrifice and service on that fateful day, becoming the only marine in the war to receive both the Navy Cross and the Medal of Honor.

In the generations that have followed, Sergeant Basilone has rightfully taken his place as an American hero of the Second World War. Raritan has held a parade in his honor every September. His statue stands in the heart of the borough. His legacy of love and service to the country has been maintained by his extended family, such as his niece Kim Van Note, through the Basilone Foundation. Kim joins us today in the House gallery.

Gunnery Sergeant Basilone, more than self, his country loved, and it is that great love of country and an American spirit I hope that inspires future generations for years—might I suggest, decades—to come. It is the least we can do in the House of Representatives to name Raritan's post office in his honor. I am honored to sponsor this legislation.

Mr. GIANFORTE. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to join my colleagues in consideration of H.R. 2815, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Post Office located at 30 East Somerset Street in Raritan, New Jersey, as the Sergeant Basilone Post Office.

We have already heard he was born in 1916 and enlisted in the United States Army at the young age of 18. While serving in the Philippines, Sergeant Basilone developed a reputation as a championship boxer.

He returned to the United States in 1937 to begin work as a truck driver, but we have heard that that was not enough. He reenlisted in the Marines in 1940.

Sergeant Basilone earned the reputation as the marine who proved that the opposition was not invincible. Sergeant Basilone was a hero. As stated, upon his death, he was awarded a Navy Cross, the Navy's highest decoration.

Mr. Speaker, we must pass this bill to name the post office in Raritan, New Jersey, after their hometown hero so that future generations might continue to be inspired by his selfless and heroic service.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the passage of H.R. 2815, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make the gentlewoman from Florida aware that I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL), my colleague.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, Sergeant Basilone was the first enlisted marine to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor in the war. In 1943, the Sunday News captured his picture with his award, the first that he would receive and the first of anyone in that war. I have had it in my office for the years that I have been on this particular issue, Mr. Speaker.

It is a great honor to salute Sergeant Basilone's family, a native of New Jersey, and a hero of our Italian-American community.

He started serving his country, as you already heard, very early in the U.S. Army; and then 3 years later, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps, where he was sent to a position on the Tenaru River in Guadalcanal and placed in command of two sections of heavy machine guns.

Despite being outnumbered, Sergeant Basilone and his men successfully defended Henderson airfield from the Japanese assault. In the process, he crossed enemy lines to replenish ammunition, he repaired artillery, and he went several days and nights without food or sleep to lead his troops. He led his troops to victory.

Sergeant Basilone's unprecedented heroics in the Pacific theater during World War II have become part of the Marine Corps lore, and for his brave service, we worked together a few years back to immortalize John Basilone with a postage stamp. How fitting, today, we want to name a post office after him.

Thanks to the campaign that spread through the Italian-American clubs and veterans halls nationwide, the United States Postal Service's Distinguished Marines stamp series included John Basilone, beginning in 2005.

He embodied the best we could hope for in a servicemember and was a true New Jersey guy; a scrappy fighter who always wanted to be on the front lines.

After his first tour, the Marine Corps offered to commission him as an officer, but Basilone responded: I ain't no officer. I ain't no museum piece. I belong back with my outfit.

He opted to return to the front lines rather than ride out the war helping promote war bonds here at home.

Tragically, Sergeant John Basilone died when he returned to the front lines while fighting at Iwo Jima, 27 years old. He earned the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Navy Cross, the Purple Heart, and the deep appreciation of a grateful nation.

John Basilone's story was brought to life to the masses in the 2010 award-winning HBO miniseries "The Pacific." Montclair State University has a Basilone dormitory, and just last year, the U.S. Navy commissioned a destroyer as the USS *Basilone*.

I marched in that parade several years ago. I know that the people of Raritan, New Jersey, have never forgotten their favorite son, and they will be honored to have a Basilone Post Office.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Italian American Congressional Delegation, I thank my colleague LEONARD LANCE for introducing this measure, and I encourage my colleagues and all Americans to learn about the storied history of Sergeant Basilone.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Montana (Mr. GIANFORTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2815.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

RUTLEDGE PEARSON POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3638) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1100 Kings Road in Jacksonville, Florida, as the "Rutledge Pearson Post Office Building".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3638

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. RUTLEDGE PEARSON POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1100 Kings Road in Jacksonville, Florida, shall be known and designated as the "Rutledge Pearson Post Office Building".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Rutledge Pearson Post Office Building".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Montana (Mr. GIANFORTE) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. DEMINGS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Montana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Montana?

There was no objection.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3638, introduced by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LAWSON). The bill names the United States Post Office at 1100 Kings Road in Jacksonville, Florida, after Rutledge Pearson.

Rutledge Pearson was an educator and instrumental leader in the civil

rights movement. He is remembered for his ability to attract young people to the fight for civil rights. Tragically, he was killed in a car accident in 1967. Today, we honor his legacy and service to his community in Jacksonville.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues in consideration of H.R. 3638, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Post Office located at 1100 Kings Road in Jacksonville, Florida, as the Rutledge Pearson Post Office Building.

Born in 1929, Rutledge Pearson graduated from New Stanton High School in 1947, before attending Tillatson College on a baseball scholarship. Following his graduation, he began playing for the Negro League's Birmingham Black Barons, but because of his race, the Jacksonville Beach Seabirds refused to allow Mr. Pearson to play on their team, deciding they would rather close the park.

His rejection, however, inspired him, and he went on to become an influential member of Jacksonville's education system and civil rights movements. He served at every level in the NAACP, and he continued to energize and inspire young people around his community, as he did in the classroom every day.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be a cosponsor of this legislation to honor Mr. Rutledge Pearson. I urge the passage of H.R. 3638, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. LAWSON).

□ 1500

Mr. LAWSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to stand before you today as we move to honor the legacy of Rutledge Pearson by naming the Jacksonville Post Office in his honor. He was a tremendous leader. Rutledge Pearson was a civil rights leader, an American history teacher, and a distinguished baseball player. His legacy in Jacksonville, and especially for civil rights, is long lasting, and this is the fitting way to honor his contribution to our community.

As a young man, Rutledge Pearson had a successful baseball career, as we heard from the Congressman, with the Birmingham Black Barons of the Negro League. His talent granted him the opportunity to play major league baseball in his hometown.

However, as we heard earlier, because of his race, the Jacksonville Beach Seabirds rejected Pearson from joining the team. In fact, park officials, as was stated also earlier, said that they would rather close the park than to have this outstanding hero, baseball player, and educator play in his hometown.

This experience prepared Pearson to pursue a career in education, and, like most of us, when you pursue a career in education, you break down a lot of barriers. Rutledge Pearson was elected president of the Jacksonville branch of the NAACP and was later elected to be president of the Florida State Conference of the NAACP.

He was known for his ability to attract young people, which all of us do today, to get young people involved in the NAACP and many community organizations. Pearson was instrumental as a leader in the fight for civil rights. Little did I know that I would be on the floor speaking for this great person whom I learned about many years ago in a history class.

Pearson was instrumental in all of his efforts, especially locally and nationally, helping change Jacksonville's culture as it is today in its landscape.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for the time, and I urge a "yes" vote to honor Rutledge Pearson for his contribution to the city of Jacksonville and to our Nation.

Also, little did I know, in 1970, that I would be sitting in a class in college with Rutledge Pearson's niece. It is so exciting to have Congress honor this great leader among people throughout the State of Florida.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Montana (Mr. GIANFORTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3638.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

BORINQUENEERS POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4042) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1415 West Oak Street, in Kissimmee, Florida, as the "Borinqueneers Post Office Building".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4042

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. BORINQUENEERS POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1415 West Oak Street, in Kissimmee, Florida, shall be known and designated as the "Borinqueneers Post Office Building".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to

be a reference to the "Borinqueneers Post Office Building".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Montana (Mr. GIANFORTE) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. DEMINGS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Montana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Montana?

There was no objection.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4042 introduced by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO). The bill names the United States Post Office at 1415 West Oak Street in Kissimmee, Florida, after the Borinqueneers.

H.R. 4042 honors the 65th Infantry Regiment of the U.S. Army known as the Borinqueneers. Congress created a special unit of Puerto Rican soldiers shortly after Puerto Rico became part of the United States in 1898. Despite years of segregation and discrimination, the Borinqueneers served admirably in World War I, World War II, and the Korean war. We owe a great debt to the many soldiers who served in this unit and fought to defend our freedom.

In April 2016, the Borinqueneers were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal by the leaders of the United States House and Senate. We honor their service and sacrifice to the country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues, particularly my colleague from central Florida, in consideration of H.R. 4042, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Post Office located in Kissimmee, Florida, as the Borinqueneers Post Office Building.

Originating in 1899, as part of the Puerto Rican Regiment of the Volunteer Army, the 65th Regiment became a part of the U.S. Army in 1908. The unit distinguished itself throughout Europe in World War II.

The 65th Regiment rapidly gained a reputation as one of the bravest and most reliable regiments and, by November 1950, had become the leading regiment by the 3rd Infantry Division.

In June of 2014, the Borinqueneers became just the second Hispanic Americans to be awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, as they were honored for the bravery and distinguished service for which they broke down racial barriers in defense of our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to cosponsor this bill, and I look forward to passing

this legislation in honor of the 65th Regiment for their service, their sacrifice, and lasting contributions to our country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the passage of H.R. 4042, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to make the gentlewoman from Florida aware that I have no further speakers and I am prepared to close.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO).

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the bill, H.R. 4042. I would like to thank the gentleman from Montana and my colleague, the gentlewoman from Orlando, Florida, for their kind and historic words.

This bill would name the United States Post Office at 1415 West Oak Street in Kissimmee, Florida, after the 65th Infantry, also known as the Borinqueneers, named after the indigenous Taino word for Puerto Rico, "Borinquen," which means, "the land of the brave Lord," where the name of the Borinqueneers was derived from.

This was a segregated unit, one of only a few that we have in history, much like the heralded Tuskegee Army, and they fought for our country bravely even while facing discrimination and segregation. They quickly gained a well-deserved reputation as one of the 3rd Infantry's most reliable units.

Their bravery inspired General Douglas MacArthur, then the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, to write: "The Puerto Ricans forming the ranks of the gallant 65th Infantry give daily proof on the battlefields of Korea of their courage, determination and resolute will to victory, their invincible loyalty to the United States and their fervent devotion to those immutable principles of human relations which the Americans of the continent and Puerto Rico have in common. They are writing a brilliant record of heroism in battle, and I am indeed proud to have to have them under my command. I wish that we could count on many more like them."

I had the opportunity a couple of months ago to go to the demilitarized zone in Korea, and I thought, as I saw those hills and those mountains that were filled with trees and with forests again, about the stark difference that some of my constituents, whom I have gotten to speak with personally, saw there in Korea. There was nothing left but muddy, cold hills, freezing temperatures. These folks, who lived their whole lives on an island in the Caribbean, were surrounded by both the Chinese and Korean Armies. And to talk with some of our local veterans like Luis Pastrana and Lou Boria—who actually lives in Congresswoman DEMINGS' district in Apopka—about how different what they faced that day

is compared to the semi-serene DMZ now. Obviously, we face other threats there. It reminded me of just how far they had gone and what they did, literally crossing the globe to make sure that our country was safe.

As the gentleman from Montana and the gentlewoman from Florida mentioned, we ultimately recognized that valor and the fact that they fought so bravely, even in the face of discrimination, on June 10, 2014—the Congressional Gold Medal, becoming the second Hispanic set of Americans here after Roberto Clemente received this award. Many folks who were born and raised on the island and served in Korea, in World War II, and ultimately in Vietnam after the unit was desegregated, now live in Kissimmee, Florida, and in central Florida, and are represented by many of us, including Congresswoman DEMINGS.

This is a very important place to recognize a group of heroes who defied expectations and really cemented a legacy of heroism that all Americans can be proud of. I want to thank the members of the Oversight and Government Reform Committee for passing this bill favorably with unanimous consent, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Montana (Mr. GIANFORTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4042.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

DR. WALTER S. MCAFEE POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3655) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1300 Main Street in Belmar, New Jersey, as the "Dr. Walter S. McAfee Post Office Building".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3655

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DR. WALTER S. MCAFEE POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1300

Main Street in Belmar, New Jersey, shall be known and designated as the "Dr. Walter S. McAfee Post Office Building".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "Dr. Walter S. McAfee Post Office Building".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Montana (Mr. GIANFORTE) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. DEMINGS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Montana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Montana?

There was no objection.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3655, introduced by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH). The bill names the United States Post Office at 1300 Main Street in Belmar, New Jersey, after Dr. Walter S. McAfee.

Dr. Walter McAfee was a scientist, educator, and adviser to the U.S. Army Communications-Electronics Command. He is credited as the first person to calculate the speed of the Moon.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), the sponsor of the bill.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentleman from Montana, for yielding and for the support that he and the ranking member provided for this important legislation.

It is an honor to bring H.R. 3655 to the House today to designate the facility of the U.S. Postal Service located at 1300 Main Street in Belmar, New Jersey, as the Dr. Walter S. McAfee Post Office Building.

Dr. Walter McAfee was a scientist, educator, and adviser to the U.S. Army Communications-Electronics Command and the Fort Monmouth community.

Mr. Speaker, I reached out to the leaders of the Information Age Learning Center, also known as InfoAge, several months ago and asked them if they could recommend a member of their community who they believed ought to be honored in this way, and they recommended Dr. McAfee.

As some of you may know, InfoAge has been the leading organization preserving scientific history, innovation, and communications located at the former Army camp, Camp Evans, and subpost of Fort Monmouth.

Dr. McAfee was instrumental in the success of Project Diana, an effort by scientists at Camp Evans that pierced

the Earth's outer atmosphere with high frequency signals, in other words, radar. It was his mathematical calculations that enabled the team to bounce the first radio signals off the Moon's surface. Without the success of his calculations that allowed for communication to occur between Earth and space, the achievements of launching the satellites into space or sending a man to the Moon would have not been possible.

It is the achievement of this extraordinary man that actually helped launch us into the space age. During his time at Fort Monmouth, Dr. McAfee also developed sensors which were used to detect and track enemy movements during the Vietnam war. He served as director of a NATO study on surveillance and target acquisition, high-priority technologies, during the Cold War.

Dr. McAfee was the first African American to be promoted to GS-16, a supergrade civilian position in the U.S. Army Materiel Command, AMC, and to be inducted into the AMC Hall of Fame. Throughout his lifetime, his achievements were recognized through dozens of awards and honors that he received for his contribution to science and to the defense of the United States and our allies.

□ 1515

He was known for his love of learning, his high ethical standards, and great sense of humor.

He passed away in 1995 in Belmar, New Jersey. He and his wife, Viola, were married for close to 54 years and are survived by their daughters, Diane Mercedes McAfee and Marsha Bera-Morris.

I thank my colleagues for their anticipated support for this legislation.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues in consideration of H.R. 3655, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1300 Main Street in Belmar, New Jersey, as the Dr. Walter S. McAfee Post Office Building.

Dr. McAfee was born in Texas in 1914 and earned degrees in mathematics and physics before receiving a Ph.D. in nuclear physics from Cornell University in 1949.

You have already heard that Dr. McAfee launched this country into the space age. Dr. McAfee also made important contributions, as you have heard, to this country as an adviser to the U.S. Army during the Vietnam war.

Mr. Speaker, we should pass this bill to commemorate the illustrious career of Dr. McAfee and the legacy he leaves behind through his impressive scientific accomplishments.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the passage of H.R. 3655.

I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Montana (Mr. GIANFORTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3655.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

JAMES C. "BILLY" JOHNSON POST OFFICE BUILDING

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4285) to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 123 Bridgeton Pike in Mullica Hill, New Jersey, as the "James C. 'Billy' Johnson Post Office Building".

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4285

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. JAMES C. "BILLY" JOHNSON POST OFFICE BUILDING.

(a) DESIGNATION.—The facility of the United States Postal Service located at 123 Bridgeton Pike in Mullica Hill, New Jersey, shall be known and designated as the "James C. 'Billy' Johnson Post Office Building".

(b) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the facility referred to in subsection (a) shall be deemed to be a reference to the "James C. 'Billy' Johnson Post Office Building".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Montana (Mr. GIANFORTE) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. DEMINGS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Montana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Montana?

There was no objection.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4285, introduced by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LOBIONDO).

The bill names the United States post office building at 123 Bridgeton Pike in Mullica Hill, New Jersey, after James C. "Billy" Johnson.

Billy Johnson joined the United States Army in 1941 as a private and was later commissioned as an officer. Second Lieutenant Johnson was killed in action in 1944.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. LOBIONDO), who is the sponsor of the bill.

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Montana for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring H.R. 4285, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 123 Bridgeton Pike in Mullica Hill, New Jersey, as the James C. "Billy" Johnson Post Office Building, to the floor for consideration.

Second Lieutenant Johnson was born and raised in my district in Richwood, New Jersey, in 1920. Due to his strong desire to serve his country, Billy enlisted as a private in the United States Army in 1941. He was later commissioned as an officer.

He was assigned to the 370th Infantry Regiment, 92nd Division during the height of the Italian Campaign in World War II. Second Lieutenant Johnson made the ultimate sacrifice for his country when he was tragically killed in action in October of 1944.

It is because of his steadfast commitment to his country, along with his valor and dedication to his country, that I support the naming of this post office after Second Lieutenant Johnson.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this legislation.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues in consideration of H.R. 4285, a bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located in Mullica Hill, New Jersey, as the James C. "Billy" Johnson Post Office Building.

You have heard he was a native of Richwood, New Jersey. He attended elementary school at Mullica Hill and graduated from Glassboro High School before attending Benedict College. In 1941, he began his military service in the United States Army.

You have heard he was assigned to the Canon Company, the 370th Infantry Regiment, 92nd Division. Regretfully, he made the ultimate sacrifice in 1944, when he was tragically killed. But his legacy lives on. He serves as an inspiration to those who have benefited from his sacrifice.

Mr. Speaker, we should pass this bill to commemorate the sacrifice that Second Lieutenant Johnson made to his country. I urge the passage of H.R. 4285.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GIANFORTE. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Montana (Mr. GIANFORTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4285.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONDEMNING THE PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS AROUND THE WORLD

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 407) condemning the persecution of Christians around the world, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 407

Whereas the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6401 et seq.) found that religious persecution is not confined to a particular region or regime and reaffirmed the commitment of the United States that religious freedom, which is the freedom of thought and conscience and the right to practice theistic and non-theistic beliefs, is the right of every individual and should never be arbitrarily abridged by any government;

Whereas the persecution of Christians is a global problem, occurring in countries across Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas;

Whereas Christians face persecution not only from Islamic extremist groups, like the Islamic State and Boko Haram, but also from other religious extremist groups and from officials at all levels of government;

Whereas the Middle East has been a home to Christians since the first century A.D., but the Christian population in the Middle East has significantly decreased over the past few decades as a result of persecution, displacement, and genocide;

Whereas such persecution ranges from social harassment and discrimination to physical violence, imprisonment, torture, enslavement, rape, and death;

Whereas Christians in Syria and Iraq have faced assault, torture, imprisonment, enslavement, and execution in a genocidal campaign by the Islamic State;

Whereas according to 2017 reports from international non-governmental organizations, the Christian population in Iraq decreased from 1,400,000 people in 2003 to just 275,000 people in 2016, as a result of displacement and genocide caused by religious extremism;

Whereas Christian holy sites in Syria have been destroyed by the Islamic State;

Whereas in 2016, approximately 200 Christians in Iran were arrested, while others have been beaten, tortured, subjected to feigned public executions, and even sentenced to death for their faith, and at least 90 remain in illegal detention;

Whereas in Saudi Arabia, Christians as well as other religious minorities face imprisonment, torture, and deportation and must practice their faith in secrecy because their houses of worship are not allowed;

Whereas on April 9, 2017, Palm Sunday, 44 people were killed in bomb attacks by the Islamic State on Coptic churches in Egypt;

Whereas the Islamic State has also claimed responsibility for the attack on a bus on May 26, 2017, in which 29 Coptic Christians were killed while traveling to a monastery in Minya, Egypt;

Whereas since the fall of the Gaddafi regime, Libya has served as a haven for militant Islamist extremist groups, like the Islamic State, which has resulted in more violent forms of Christian persecution;

Whereas the Islamic State claimed responsibility for the killing of 51 Coptic Christians in Libya in February and March of 2015;

Whereas Christian migrants from northern Africa traveling through Libya on their way to Europe have been abducted, trafficked, and forced to convert to Islam at the hands of the Islamic State;

Whereas in Afghanistan there are reports that converts to Christianity have been murdered or sent to mental hospitals;

Whereas Christians in Pakistan face accusations of blasphemy, punishable by death, and convictions and sentences for blasphemy are given despite little or no evidence;

Whereas according to Open Doors USA, approximately 600 Christian churches were attacked in Pakistan in 2016;

Whereas both Christians and Muslims in Nigeria have been massacred by Islamic extremist groups like Boko Haram;

Whereas Christian converts in Somalia often face public execution;

Whereas in 2017, a mob of 100 men attacked a Christian church in Uganda, beating and raping members of the congregation;

Whereas in May 2017, a Christian governor in Indonesia was found guilty of blasphemy and sentenced to two years in prison, in what was widely seen as a challenge to religious pluralism in Indonesia;

Whereas communist regimes have a strong history of oppressing and persecuting Christians as well as other religious minorities;

Whereas since 2013, in the Zhejiang Province of China, crosses have been removed from over 1,500 churches as part of that province's anti-cross campaign;

Whereas in China, members of Christian churches, as well as other religious minorities, that are not registered with the government face increased persecution from the Chinese state, including the risk of imprisonment and torture;

Whereas in North Korea, the practice of Christianity is prohibited and if caught, Christians are sent to forced labor camps;

Whereas in November 2016, Vietnam adopted a new "Law on Belief and Religion" that falls dramatically short of internationally accepted standards for human rights and curtails the right to religious freedom for over 8,000,000 Christians in that country;

Whereas in Mexico and Colombia, Christian church leaders have been assaulted, threatened, and in some cases killed by transnational criminal organizations and paramilitary armed groups attempting to intimidate and silence them;

Whereas religious discrimination, including the persecution of Christians, is a global human rights problem; and

Whereas the right to religious freedom is a universal right recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) condemns all violations of religious freedom and affirms that religious freedom is a fundamental right of every individual that should never be arbitrarily abridged by any government;

(2) condemns the persecution of Christians around the world;

(3) calls on discriminatory countries to cease their persecution of Christians and religious minorities and combat religious persecution carried out by extremist non-state actors; and

(4) urges the President and the heads of the governments of all countries around the world to uphold the right to religious freedom and condemn the global persecution of Christians and other religious minorities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material in the RECORD on this measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me begin here by thanking the gentleman from Wisconsin, Representative GLENN GROTHMAN, for his work on this resolution.

As many in our country are preparing to celebrate this season of peace and joy, thousands of Christian believers around the world are marking the holiday in a much more somber way. They are marking this holiday under a threat of persecution and under a threat of violence.

Pope Francis has said: "When we read the history of the first centuries, we read of so much cruelty toward Christians. I tell you: There is the same cruelty today, and to a greater extent."

Those were his words.

According to research, Christians today are more targeted for attack than any other body of believers.

While about 30 percent of the world's population identifies as Christian, 80 percent of all reported acts of religious persecution right now are directed at Christians. Open Doors charity reports that, each month, around the world, 300 Christians are murdered—this would be for their faith—and more than 200 churches and properties are destroyed. This is each month.

Over 770 acts of violence are committed against Christians, including beatings, abductions, rapes, arrests, and forced marriages.

For example, across the Middle East there are historic Christian communities that are only one or two generations away from extinction. These were the indigenous people to this region. In Iraq, there are now fewer than 250,000 Christians remaining of a community that once had more than 1.4 million believers.

Last Congress, the House took the lead in declaring the violence against Christians committed by ISIS in Iraq and Syria as genocide. Since then, Congress has pushed hard to make sure that these vulnerable communities are protected and receive the assistance that they need.

I have visited these communities up in northern Iraq, and I can attest to the amount of persecution that they have been through.

Of course, our brave men and women in uniform deserve our praise for lead-

ing the fight to destroy ISIS, the so-called caliphate, allowing for the safe return of Christians and other religious minorities in the region.

We are blessed to live in this country free to enjoy our religious festivals in peace and security. We must not turn a blind eye to the atrocities happening elsewhere in the world.

With passage of this measure, we acknowledge the disturbing rise in persecution of Christians around this globe and recommit our Nation to support the religious freedom of all people.

We also call on other world leaders to end persecution of Christians and other religious minorities that are also persecuted at the national, local government, and community level. This includes persecution, of course, by violent non-state actors like terrorist groups Boko Haram and ISIS.

With this call to action, we work to advance our Nation's historic goal to promote "peace on Earth and goodwill toward men."

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this measure. I want to thank Mr. GROTHMAN from Wisconsin for authoring this resolution. I also thank my good friend and the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, ED ROYCE, for his leadership as always.

Mr. Speaker, freedom of worship is a basic human right, yet we see religious minorities all over the world subjected to persecution and violence.

In Iraq and Syria, ISIS has forced Christians in Mosul to convert to Islam, to pay a protection tax, and to flee or face execution. ISIS has carried out genocide against the Yazidis, the Christians, and the Shias. In Europe, we see synagogues fire-bombed and a surge of anti-Semitism across the continent. In Burma, we see government security forces engaged in ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya.

□ 1530

Freedom of religion has been a bedrock principle of open and democratic societies for centuries. It is enshrined in our founding documents, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and in charters of democracies all over the world.

The freedom to worship as a person chooses or not to worship at all is a broad right that should not be restrained by a government or a fanatical group. Religious persecution holds societies back, undercuts progress, and is usually associated with a much broader assault on basic human rights.

Here in the United States, we must make it clear that it is not enough to just guarantee religious liberty to our own people. We must speak out and act when we see this freedom, this liberty, and any other freedom under attack anywhere and hold accountable those responsible for human rights abuses.

In places like China, we see freedom of speech under attack. In Chechnya,

we see LGBT individuals targeted, tortured, and executed by Putin's cronies just for whom they love. We see women's reproductive rights under attack.

We must also speak out against attacks on our press, on our right to organize, on equality for LGBT persons, and on women's right to control their own bodies. This legislation helps us send a clear message that protecting all human rights is a priority for the United States.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we all know that America's first immigrants came here because they were fleeing religious persecution in their home countries. It would be hypocritical of us to condemn current-day religious persecution around the world and then to slam our doors shut in the face of those trying to flee such persecution. America must remain a place where those facing persecution or death can find refuge.

Mr. Speaker, I support this measure and urge my colleagues to do the same, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. GROTHMAN), the author of this resolution.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my resolution, H. Res. 407, condemning the persecution of Christians around the world.

The persecution of Christians is a global human rights problem that Congress needs to address. According to Open Doors' 2017 World Watch List, approximately 1 in 12 Christians around the world is experiencing persecution for their faith.

North Korea, which is one of the world's most repressive regimes, is a serious violator of international religious Christian rights, which is not surprising, given it is a communist country. Communist countries throughout history have done what they can to suppress and destroy Christians.

Human rights groups have reported that members of underground churches in North Korea have been arrested, beaten, tortured, or killed.

In another communist country, China, religious groups, including Christians, are required to register with the government. Those that do not face imprisonment and torture.

In 2016, 232 Protestants were imprisoned for their religious activities. As part of the country's anti-cross campaign, some 2,000 crosses and buildings have been demolished since 2014, according to State Department estimates.

In the Middle East, the Islamic State and other jihadist militant groups have forced Christians in Iraq, Syria, Libya, and other countries in the region to flee or risk enslavement, execution, or death. Since the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, the number of Christians in Iraq has plunged from 1.5 million to just a couple hundred thousand.

In Libya, ISIS and other extremist groups have gained a stronghold in the country since the fall of Qadhafi.

I reluctantly have to point out that the Christian persecution going on in Libya and Iraq has happened after the United States decided to get involved in these countries, so we have a special responsibility to look out for the Christians there.

In Egypt, ISIS claimed responsibility for killing over 70 Coptic Christians earlier this year.

The persecution of Christians in the Middle East doesn't end with terrorists. It is institutional, as well.

Pakistan has some of the most extreme blasphemy laws in the world. In June of 2016, two Christians received death sentences for blasphemy convictions.

In Iran, approximately 200 Christians were arrested last year. At least 90 remain in illegal detention.

Acts of persecution against Christians across the globe is a violation of international law, which is why Congress must act.

Sadly, in our own country, the United States, sometimes Christians can be forced to participate in ceremonies with which they don't agree. It is kind of hard to believe that this is going on in the United States of America.

H. Res. 407 will condemn the persecution of Christians around the world. It calls for all discriminatory countries and groups to cease their persecution of religious minorities and urge world leaders to uphold the universal human right to religious freedom.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support this bipartisan resolution.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY).

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague for yielding and for his incredible leadership as the ranking member on this important committee. I also thank Chairman ROYCE for his work on this issue, bringing the bill to the floor, and truly being a visionary legislator in shining a spotlight on the systematic persecution of Christians around the world. It is frightening, it is wrong, and we need to do everything we can to stop it.

Freedom of religion is a core American principle and a key component for peace and stability around the world. There are too many examples of Christian persecution. Congress must clearly condemn those atrocities.

As cofounder and co-chair of the Hellenic Caucus, I have long advocated for reforms in Turkey to respect the rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and reopen the Halki seminary.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman an additional 1 minute.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Boko Haram has wreaked havoc in Nigeria, killing innocent Christians and Muslims alike.

Coptic Christians in Egypt and elsewhere face the constant threat of vio-

lence, and we have seen some tragedies for this community just in the past year. The number of Coptic Christians that have been killed is truly astounding. They have laws now that, if a wall falls or any church needs repair, you cannot even repair the church.

These are just a few examples of spots around the world where Christian persecution is rampant.

Persecution against Christians and other religious minorities around the world is a security crisis, and the United States Government must remain vigilant in monitoring and response. It should be a unanimous vote in support of this important resolution.

I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for bringing this to the attention of Congress and, hopefully, the world.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, protecting human rights has been and must remain a cornerstone of our foreign policy. Around the world, we see religious liberties under siege in places like Iraq, Syria, Burma, and certainly in Iran. But we also see threats to free press, rights to organize, persecution for sexual orientation, and even reproductive rights in places like China, Chechnya, and other places as well. So we must send a clear message to the world that the United States does not and will not stand idly by, and helping pass this measure helps us to say just that.

I want to thank Chairman ROYCE, as always, for his cooperation. This is strong, important, bipartisan legislation, and we should pass it unanimously.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me supporting H. Res. 407, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank Mr. ENGEL for his leadership in bringing these issues to the floor and, certainly, our colleague, the cosponsor of this resolution, CAROLYN MALONEY. I thank, again, Congressman GLENN GROTHMAN for authoring this important resolution here.

Christians around the world are being assaulted, raped, tortured, and murdered. Believers in North Korea, for example, have "disappeared" by the hundreds. They are hidden away in labor camps for decades. Many of them are worked to death, as you know by the conditions in those camps. The reason they are there is they attempted to practice their faith: Christianity.

We know that, at the hands of ISIS, brutal atrocities have risen to the level of genocide. Wherever ISIS goes, you see the consequence in the terror that is visited upon Christians, Yazidis, Jews, and other races.

In terms of the positioning that ISIS had in the Middle East, they had ready access to the Christian communities.

Having visited those Christian communities in the aftermath of those attacks as they escaped into the Kurdish regions, it was absolutely heart-wrenching to hear the accounts of the survivors about what had happened among the Christians and Yazidis.

These are just a few of the examples of the persecution against Christians that is happening around the world.

I urge my colleagues to join me in this call to world leaders to work to stop the global persecution of Christians.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 407 condemning the persecution of Christians around the world, as amended.

I am proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with all those who have been persecuted for their religious views and remain committed to fighting with you as we embark on the journey of promoting freedom of conscience, speech, association, religion, and all other freedoms that are inalienable to all humankind.

As a Member of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, I continue to work with my colleagues in a bipartisan manner in order to amplify the important work of upholding religious freedom, facilitating human dignity, and protecting human rights.

As a Member of Congress, one of our charges is to understand how to improve religious freedom and diplomacy across the globe and here at home.

A good measure for this congressional call of fostering religious freedom and diplomacy is H. Res. 407 that calls on:

(1) discriminatory regimes to cease their persecution of not only Christians but all religious minorities, and

(2) the President and heads of the governments of all democratic countries to uphold the right to religious freedom and condemn the persecution of Christians and minorities.

This resolution highlights the United States foreign policy commitment to the protection and promotion of religious freedom across the globe from Indonesia, to Pakistan to Nigeria to China to name a few.

The persecution of religious minorities is a global problem, occurring in countries across the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

Christians, for example, face persecution not only from Islamic extremist groups, like the Islamic State and Boko Haram, but also from other religious extremist groups and from officials at all levels of certain foreign government.

Such persecution of religious minorities ranges from social harassment and discrimination to physical violence, imprisonment, torture, enslavement, rape, and death.

Over 200 million Christians experience persecution across the globe, the majority of those are found in the Middle East. But it is important to note that Christianity is not a Western imposition on historically Islamic countries in the Middle East.

The Middle East has been a home to Christians since the first century A.D., but unfortunately the Christian population in the Middle East has significantly decreased over the past few decades as a result of persecution, displacement, and genocide.

Not only Christian lives, but also Christian holy sites have been destroyed by the Islamic State.

And not only Christians, but anyone who opposed their ruthless war on peace.

In many places, Christians must practice their faith in secrecy because churches are not allowed, and makeshift churches in homes are raided.

A loud example of this persecution is aimed at the Coptic Christians in Egypt that have faced persecution for over 50 years, and on April 9, 2017, Palm Sunday, 44 people were killed in bomb attacks by the Islamic State on Coptic churches.

The Islamic State has claimed responsibility for the attack on a bus on May 26, 2017, in which 29 Coptic Christians were killed while traveling to a monastery in Minya, Egypt;

This important resolution describes numerous instances where Christians have been attacked by terrorist groups, groups that hide behind religion as a pretext to destroy minority groups and to recklessly and harmfully seek power.

Religious minority persecution has been on the rise in Asia, primarily due to religious nationalism.

Recently, in Bangladesh, hundreds of Christians are being forced off their property, and legal action rarely results in the favor of a Christian party.

In Burma/Myanmar, since late August 2017, more than 645 thousand ethnic Rohingya have fled a campaign of ethnic cleansing by Burma's security forces and sought asylum in Bangladesh.

The Rohingya massacre is another example of religious minority persecution, overlooked and disregarded by a government that, as some may surmise, values power over people.

Not surprisingly, Christians and other dissidents of the government in North Korea are forced into harsh labor camps, where approximately 70,000 Christians are imprisoned in 2017.

All that is to say that religious discrimination is a global human rights problem and the right to religious freedom is a universal right recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In the 114th Congress, I introduced and continue to support legislation by my colleagues that seek to protect religious freedom and democracy which are the very bedrock of the United States Constitution.

Fighting for human rights across the globe is one of my passions and I have sought to promote and protect religious freedom such as H. Res. 290, a resolution I introduced in the last Congress condemning blasphemy laws that serve as a pretext to persecute religious minorities; that resolution was co-sponsored by our former colleague, Joseph Pitts of Pennsylvania.

Within the context of H. Res. 407 and other legislation addressing human rights, some of the issues we continue to grapple with include:

Expanding the Country of Particular Concern (CPC) list to include more countries who have not improved in their treatment of religious minorities or upholding religious freedoms;

The need for an Annual Countries of Particular Concerns Designations;

Double hatting of sanctions and indefinite waivers;

The need to designate non-state actors as violators of religious freedom;

Prosecuting Islamic state militants; and

The need to have a high functioning Department of State with appropriate leadership for both senior and junior staff, and sufficient funding.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 407, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REAFFIRMING A STRONG COMMITMENT TO THE UNITED STATES-MEXICO PARTNERSHIP

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 336) reaffirming a strong commitment to the United States-Mexico partnership.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 336

Whereas shared cultural ties, values, and beliefs connect the citizens of the United States and Mexico and have long been the foundation from which the friendly, bilateral relationship has flourished;

Whereas the United States and Mexico have benefited from a bilateral, mutually beneficial partnership focused on advancing the economic and security interests of both countries;

Whereas it is in the national interests of the United States and Mexico to continue deepening economic cooperation and security cooperation;

Whereas consecutive United States and Mexican administrations have increased bilateral defense and law enforcement cooperation on counterterrorism and counter-narcotics issues, including the illicit trafficking of weapons, money, people, and drugs across the United States southern border;

Whereas cooperation with Mexico during the administration of President Peña Nieto has led to the extradition of more than 270 individuals facing criminal charges in the United States;

Whereas, the January 19, 2017, extradition of drug kingpin Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán to New York was a major victory for both countries that would not have been possible without a robust United States-Mexico security partnership;

Whereas the Mérida Initiative was established in 2007 and enabled a new level of security cooperation between the United States and Mexico on a range of issues including efforts to combat transnational organized crime and promote justice reform;

Whereas the United States and Mexico have begun cooperation to address the trafficking and production of heroin and fentanyl threatening the lives of citizens in both countries;

Whereas the United States has provided almost \$2.8 billion in security assistance to Mexico through the Mérida Initiative between fiscal year 2008 and fiscal year 2017;

Whereas the United States and Mexico enjoy close diplomatic cooperation and Mexico has consistently voted with the United States at the United Nations on challenges related to Syria, North Korea, and Ukraine;

Whereas the United States and Mexico have closely collaborated at the Organization of American States (OAS) on issues related to Venezuela, where Mexico has played a leading role;

Whereas Mexico is an important security and defense partner to the United States, and regularly participates in training activities in coordination with United States Northern Command (NORTHCOM) and the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD); and

Whereas the United States and Mexico launched the High Level Economic Dialogue on September 20, 2013, to help advance United States-Mexico economic and commercial priorities to promote mutual economic growth, job creation, educational exchanges and innovation, and global competitiveness: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) reaffirms its strong commitment to a United States-Mexico partnership based on mutual respect and the promotion of shared democratic values and principles;

(2) supports continued bilateral cooperation through the High Level Economic Dialogue on issues related to the economic well-being and security of both countries;

(3) encourages continued security cooperation between the United States and Mexican law enforcement agencies and militaries, including on violence reduction in Mexico, counterterrorism and the increased trafficking of heroin and fentanyl;

(4) supports continued engagement with Mexico to tackle regional issues and work together in international fora, including the United Nations and the Organization of American States; and

(5) supports efforts by the Government of Mexico to strengthen the rule of law, reduce corruption, and advance civil and human rights.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include any extraneous material in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. ENGEL. This is his bill. Let me also say that the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, MIKE MCCAUL, who was his primary cosponsor for this, has worked hard on this resolution. It represents a broad, bipartisan acknowledgment of the importance of the relationship between the United States of America and the country of Mexico.

The United States and Mexico share strong ties. Passage of this resolution will signal this body's commitment to strengthening our bilateral relationship with Mexico, a relationship that impacts Americans on a daily basis.

Today, the United States is grappling with challenges, just as Mexico is grappling with some challenges. We have a deadly drug crisis where more than 1,000 people a week die from opioid-related overdoses. This is a crisis that started with overprescribed pain medication here in the United States but is now fueled by heroin and fentanyl supplied by drug cartels.

We have got to strengthen our partnership with Mexico and continue working with Mexican security forces to stem the tide of these illegal drugs entering into our communities and to harden our shared border against terrorism and criminality.

This resolution also affirms the strong commercial relationship between our two countries. Mexico was the second largest export market for U.S. goods last year. It affirms our long history of cooperation on environmental and natural resource issues.

For example, this past September, our two countries signed an agreement to improve reservoir levels in Lake Mead and in the Colorado River Basin that will help prevent water shortages currently affecting Americans in the Southwest United States.

□ 1545

There are, of course, areas that I think we can improve the U.S.-Mexico relationship. Mexico needs to do more to combat the corruption that has taken its toll on its citizens' trust.

But this resolution comes at an important time in the U.S. with our relationship with Mexico and should signal to the people of Mexico that the people of the United States want to continue to work with Mexico on matters of mutual concern, from security to combating the illegal drug trade, to strengthening our respective economies.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I thank our chairman, ED ROYCE, for working with me to bring this measure to the floor, and I thank Congressman MCCAUL, the lead Republican sponsor of this resolution, as well. I am pleased to be the lead sponsor on this resolution.

After more than a decade of good progress in the U.S.-Mexico partnership, this year we have seen some things change course in a troubling way. It is a problem, and it needs to be stopped. That is why I offer this measure reaffirming our strong commitment to our relationship with Mexico. We don't want anyone there to have any kinds of questions. We believe in a strong U.S.-Mexico relationship.

Mr. Speaker, I also thank our ranking member on the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, Mr. SIREN, and Mr. CASTRO for their efforts on this resolution and their support day in and

day out for a robust U.S.-Mexico partnership.

Mr. Speaker, it is hard to overstate how important the U.S.-Mexico relationship is and the tremendous impact it has on Americans every single day. Mexico is a friend and ally. Mexico is our third largest trading partner. It is a country with which we share deep person-to-person, family, and cultural ties, and it is a country where we have painstakingly cultivated a vibrant, critical relationship between our two countries.

Over the past century, there have been many highs and lows in the U.S.-Mexico relationship. Unfortunately, sometimes, recently, we have had a lot of lows with talk about building walls and other derogatory talk about Mexicans. We don't want that to continue. We want to establish and reaffirm the strong U.S.-Mexico relationship.

In 2007, I became chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. That was the same day that the Merida Initiative was announced by Presidents Bush and Calderon, which led to a new level of security cooperation between the United States and Mexico.

That effort wasn't perfect then and it isn't today. The civilian toll of Mexico's drug war is still far too high, and human rights violations at the federal, state, and local level in Mexico remain a serious problem. But what we gained from the Merida Initiative was an entirely new way of collaborating with the Mexican Government on a wide range of security issues.

Presidents Obama and Pena Nieto built on Merida's foundation, and one of the results was a remarkable achievement in the last hours of the Obama administration, which was the extradition of drug kingpin "El Chapo" Guzman to my hometown of New York City to stand trial. Without a strong U.S.-Mexico partnership, that would not have been possible. A decade ago, it probably would not have happened at all.

And while we absolutely don't need to waste billions of taxpayer dollars on a 2,000-mile-long wall against our southern border, what we do need is to maintain our partnership on security matters with the Mexican Government.

We want the Mexican Government to continue to reach out to us with information regarding suspected terrorists. We want to say that the Mexican Government will cooperate with us and extradite the next drug kingpin to the United States, and it goes on and on. So we cannot overemphasize just how important the U.S.-Mexico partnership is and how it keeps Americans safe on a day-to-day basis.

H. Res. 336 underscores the importance of a U.S.-Mexico relationship built on mutual respect. Mutual respect means building bridges, not walls, between our two countries; it means recognizing the vast contributions of Mexican Americans to our country and not classifying an entire

population as drug dealers and rapists; it means not singling out an esteemed judge based solely on his race.

Congress has an important opportunity today to be the adult in the room and let the Mexican Government and the Mexican people know that our relationship with them is very, very important and will continue to be important. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this measure. I am pleased that we have support for this on both sides of the aisle.

I thank Chairman ROYCE, as always, for his cooperation and his partnership, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TORRES), my good friend and colleague on the Foreign Affairs Committee, and a very valued member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mrs. TORRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 336, which reaffirms our strong commitment to the United States-Mexico partnership.

Mexico is our neighbor and one of our most important strategic allies. Under NAFTA and the Merida Initiative, our countries have expanded our economic and security cooperation in ways that involve almost every aspect of our lives. Our work with Mexico goes beyond the Federal Government. It is in our State and local governments. It is in our businesses and in our churches.

H. Res. 336 holds up the idea that working with Mexico has been good for our security and our economy. No one is saying that our relationship is perfect. We still have real security problems to address, especially the smuggling of guns, drugs, and money across our borders, and we need to do more—a lot more—to lift up those communities that have not benefited from NAFTA; but, on the whole, we are better off when we work together.

Working together is what makes it possible to have those tough conversations about those issues where we disagree, so we shouldn't even need to pass a resolution like this. It should be assumed. It should be common sense. But the rhetoric across this administration has made it necessary for Congress to speak out in defense of our neighbor and our ally, and we are here today speaking out.

I thank Representative ENGEL and Representative MCCAUL for their leadership, and I thank Chairman ROYCE for his ongoing work in bringing this resolution forward and ongoing work in the committee to ensure that we work on a bipartisan level.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, let me close on a positive note. I believe that it is not too

late to reverse course on this latest direction of U.S.-Mexico ties. At a difficult moment in our bilateral relationship, I am heartened to stand here on the House floor and listen to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle offer such robust support for the U.S.-Mexico relationship.

I again thank Chairman ROYCE and Mr. MCCAUL for their help and support of this resolution. What we need is to maintain and even strengthen our cooperation on security and economic matters with the Mexican Government. Passage of H. Res. 336 today is an excellent step. Congress really needs to lead the way.

So I thank, again, my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for supporting this resolution, and I pledge to do everything I can to continue to enhance the very important U.S.-Mexico relationship.

I think it is important to state that this relationship is not only important to Mexico, but it is important to the United States for so many different reasons. That is why I think it is important for Congress to reaffirm its support, strong support, for the U.S.-Mexico relationship.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for supporting this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, again, I thank the author, the ranking member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Mr. ENGEL, and I thank Congresswoman NORMA TORRES, as well, and the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, MIKE MCCAUL, for their work on this important resolution recognizing the U.S.-Mexico partnership and recognizing our important economic relationship. As our countries continue to work together, this resolution signals our commitment to strengthen our ties with our Mexican neighbors.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 336.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REAFFIRMING THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 357) reaffirming the strategic partnership between the United States and Canada, recognizing bilateral cooperation that advances United States national inter-

ests, and urging increased bilateral cooperation on security, economic issues, and energy, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 357

Whereas history, proximity, commerce, security, and shared democratic values underpin a close relationship between the United States and Canada;

Whereas this year marks 150 years of the Canadian Confederation;

Whereas Americans and Canadians have the longest international border and one of the largest commercial relationships in the world, with \$1.7 billion of trade and nearly 400,000 people crossing the shared border daily;

Whereas Canada is the United States second-largest trading partner and the largest export destination for United States goods and services, and a majority of States of the United States consider Canada their top export destination, with 15 States counting Canada as their top point of origin for imports;

Whereas the United States and Canada cooperate extensively within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and through a "Tri-Command Framework" with United States Northern Command (NORTHCOM), Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC), and North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD);

Whereas Canada has been a critical ally of the United States in the global war on terror, deploying approximately 2,800 Canadian troops in the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan from 2006-2011, the fifth-largest national contingent in the ISAF;

Whereas 158 Canadian Armed Forces personnel bravely gave their lives while participating in the ISAF in Afghanistan;

Whereas Canada has 830 Canadian Armed Forces personnel currently serving in the Middle East in support of the United States-led coalition to counter the Islamic State;

Whereas longstanding bilateral border security cooperation between the United States and Canada protects vital United States security interests while promoting trade and travel;

Whereas the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative, Beyond the Border Initiative, United States-Canada NEXUS Trusted Traveler Program, Border Enforcement Security Taskforces (BEST), Shiprider Integrated Cross Border Maritime Law Enforcement program, Cross Border Crime Forum, Integrated Border Enforcement Teams, and United States preclearance operations conducted at eight Canadian airports enhance United States-Canadian border security efforts;

Whereas Canada is the world's sixth-largest petroleum producer in the world and is the United States largest foreign supplier of energy, including oil, uranium, natural gas, and electricity;

Whereas Canada is the largest source of imported oil for United States refineries and while the United States produces 90 percent of the natural gas it uses, of the remaining natural gas that the United States imports, 97 percent comes from Canada;

Whereas Canada is a net exporter of electricity to the United States, with more than 30 active electricity transmission connectors between the two countries;

Whereas Canada is a strategic leader in international affairs, a member of the G7 and G20, and an important voice for democratic

principles, market-oriented policies, and human rights in the United Nations, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and Organization of American States; and

Whereas, on February 13, 2017, President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada held their first official meeting and reaffirmed the importance of the United States-Canadian relationship: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) reaffirms its robust commitment to the critical importance of the United States-Canadian partnership;

(2) supports stronger trade relations with the Government of Canada and the creation of more American jobs;

(3) encourages greater security collaboration in the areas of defense, border security, cyber-security, and Arctic security; and

(4) supports an increased focus on energy security through greater energy infrastructure integration, including oil and natural gas and renewable sources, planning, and coordination.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include any extraneous material in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to recognize the leadership of Mr. DUNCAN, who, until recently, served as the chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, and Mr. GREGORY MEEKS, the ranking member, in bringing this important resolution forward.

I also want to recognize Mr. HUIZenga, chairman of the Capital Markets, Securities, and Investments Subcommittee of the Financial Services Committee, who led the delegation this past fall with the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group in Windsor, Canada.

This resolution affirms the already strong partnership we enjoy with our neighbors to the north, while recognizing that this bilateral relationship has advanced U.S. national interests.

Canada and the U.S. share the longest international border of any countries in the world. Canada is one of the largest trading partners with the U.S., and our largest agricultural export market. U.S. exports of goods and services to Canada supported 1.6 million jobs in the United States last year.

In addition, the U.S. and Canada enjoy a very close and vital security

relationship, which is seen most acutely in our close border security collaboration, as well as in defense arrangements such as NORAD and our shared NATO mutual security commitments.

Our two countries have an exceptionally close energy relationship. Canada is our largest supplier of oil, natural gas, electricity, and uranium. Our two countries collaborate on environmental concerns, particularly with our shared responsibility for the Great Lakes, which are the world's largest freshwater ecosystem and contain 20 percent of the Earth's surface freshwater.

This relationship gives Congress the opportunity to reaffirm, through this resolution, our important and close bilateral ties with Canada and to renew our commitment to growing and improving that relationship to the benefit of both countries.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this measure, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC, December 8, 2017.

Hon. KEVIN BRADY,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BRADY: Thank you for consulting with the Foreign Affairs Committee and agreeing to forgo a sequential referral request on House Resolution 357, Reaffirming the strategic partnership between the United States and Canada, so that the resolution may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of your committee, or prejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this resolution or similar legislation in the future.

I will seek to place our letters on H. Res. 357 into the Congressional Record during floor consideration. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work together as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, December 11, 2017.

Hon. EDWARD R. ROYCE,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ROYCE: I am writing with respect to H. Res. 357, reaffirming the strategic partnership between the United States and Canada, on which the Committee on Ways and Means was granted an additional referral.

As a result of your having consulted with us on H. Res. 357, I agree to waive formal consideration of this resolution so that it may move expeditiously to the floor. The Committee on Ways and Means takes this action with the mutual understanding that we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and the Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as the resolution or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues that fall within our jurisdiction.

Finally, I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding,

and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of H. Res. 357.

Sincerely,

KEVIN BRADY,
Chairman.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I want to, first of all, thank the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN), who, until recently, was the chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee. We will have him back on the committee any time he wants to come. I thank him for authorizing this resolution reaffirming the importance of the strategic partnership between the United States and Canada.

I also appreciate the efforts of my good friend Mr. MEEKS as the lead Democratic sponsor, and again, I thank Chairman ROYCE for working to bring this measure to the House floor.

□ 1600

It is only appropriate, after spending time on the House floor discussing the importance of the U.S. relationship of our neighbor to the South, that we also focus on the strategic partnership between the United States and our neighbor to the North, which, of course, is Canada.

Canada is our second largest trading partner. Interesting, Canada is our second largest trading partner—and Mexico is our third largest trading partner—with about \$1.7 billion in goods and services and 400,000 citizens in both countries crossing the border on a daily basis. Think about that, 400,000 citizens from both countries cross the U.S.-Canadian border on a daily basis.

The preclearance process makes it easy for Americans traveling to Canada to clear U.S. customs while at a number of airports in Canada and arrive back home almost as if they were on a domestic flight. Of course, our relationship goes far beyond commerce and tourism, and I am particularly pleased that H. Res. 357 takes note of the extensive cooperation between the United States and Canada at NATO.

Canada has been and remains a key U.S. ally in several international conflicts around the world, including in Afghanistan, where Canada employed 2,800 troops to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force from 2006 to 2011.

I also want to note the crucial role that Canada has played in holding Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his lackeys accountable through both multilateral action at the OAS—Organization of American States—and targeted sanctions. Most recently, I was very pleased that Canadian Foreign Minister Freeland hosted the Lima Group in Toronto in October.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the U.S.-Canada relationship needs to be rejuvenated, needs to not be taken for granted. We have to work at that over time,

and I think it is important that we all work at that.

As a global entity, the U.S.-Canada relationship should be a relatively even one to manage. We don't want to have jobs at risk by creating a trade war with Canada. Trade disputes between two big neighbors are normal. We should not be escalating manageable disagreements in a way that could hurt workers in both of our countries.

So I believe that we should let all the leaders know that the House is leading the way, and we hope that everyone follows Congress' lead today in affirming the importance of the U.S.-Canada relationship.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN). He is the author of this resolution.

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman and the Foreign Affairs Committee for helping move this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, being the former chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, I rise to encourage the passage of H. Res. 357 to reaffirm the strategic partnership between the United States and Canada.

As my good friend and former United States Ambassador to Canada, David Wilkins taught me that Canada is one of our strongest allies and one of our largest and best trading partners, and we are dependent on cooperation between the nations to promote trade, security, and energy issues.

It is imperative that we protect the close partnership with Canada and the interdependent North American energy market. Enforcing the strength of our relationship with Canada would expand the size of our energy market, create more jobs, reduce energy cost for consumers, and enhance North American energy security and interdependence. I remind the administration that energy issues should be a top priority in any NAFTA negotiation, as Canada is the largest supplier of energy to the United States. Now, this includes oil, uranium, natural gas, and electricity.

We share the longest undefended border, the largest bilateral trading relationship, and one of the deepest security and energy partnerships in the world. Today, 32 States consider Canada their primary trading partner. The comprehensive trade and investment relationship, which the United States has with Canada, supports millions of jobs in goods and services on both sides of the border. The importance of this bilateral relationship is critical for both countries.

Let me conclude by saying it is vital that we continue to look for ways to strengthen our relationship with Canada, and I hope that my colleagues will support this resolution to reaffirm the importance of U.S.-Canada relations.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, let me say that this year marks the 150th anniversary of the Canadian Confederation. So it is appropriate that we are considering this important resolution on the House floor before 2017 comes to a close.

As was said by all the other Members, the U.S. and Canada share so much more than just our extensive borders and daily commerce. We share people-to-people ties that run generations deep and continue on a daily basis.

Today, by passing H. Res. 357, Congress has an opportunity to show our commitment to and gratitude for the U.S.-Canada relationship. We also have an opportunity to show the world how two nations can get along with miles and miles of continuous borders.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important resolution. I again thank Chairman ROYCE and the former chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee for their work.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I want to once again thank Representative DUNCAN and Mr. MEEKS and Mr. HUIZENGA and Mr. ENGEL for their commitment to the U.S.-Canada relationship and for bringing this important resolution forward.

This resolution affirms the already strong partnership that we enjoy with our neighbors to the North while recognizing that this bilateral relationship has advanced our national interests.

In addition to working together on trade, on border security, on energy, Canada is also a valuable partner in security. As my colleagues know, Canada is a founding member of NATO and leads a NATO battalion in Latvia—I happen to have seen that battalion recently in Latvia—while maintaining 200 Canadian military trainers in Ukraine.

Our shared values and proximity have rendered Canada one of our most important allies, and this resolution allows this body to stand together in affirming that relationship. I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 357, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following commu-

nication from the Honorable NANCY PELOSI, Democratic Leader:

DECEMBER 12, 2017.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN: Pursuant to section 1238(b)(3) of the Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2001 (22 U.S.C. 7002), as amended, I am pleased to reappoint the following individuals to the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission. These appointments would be effective January 1, 2018.

Ms. Carolyn Bartholomew of Washington, D.C.

Mr. Michael Wessel of Falls Church, VA
Thank you for your attention to these appointments.

Sincerely,

NANCY PELOSI,
Democratic Leader.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 8 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1634

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas) at 4 o'clock and 34 minutes p.m.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2396, PRIVACY NOTIFICATION TECHNICAL CLARIFICATION ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4015, CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REFORM AND TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2017

Mr. WOODALL, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115-462) on the resolution (H. Res. 657) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2396) to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to update the exception for certain annual notices provided by financial institutions, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4015) to improve the quality of proxy advisory firms for the protection of investors and the U.S. economy, and in the public interest, by fostering accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and competition in the proxy advisory firm industry, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1638, IRANIAN LEADERSHIP ASSET TRANSPARENCY ACT, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4324, STRENGTHENING OVERSIGHT OF IRAN'S ACCESS TO FINANCE ACT

Mr. WOODALL, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report

(Rept. No. 115-463) on the resolution (H. Res. 658) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1638) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees on the estimated total assets under direct or indirect control by certain senior Iranian leaders and other figures, and for other purposes, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4324) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to make certifications with respect to United States and foreign financial institutions' aircraft-related transactions involving Iran, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, proceedings will resume on questions previously postponed.

Votes will be taken in the following order:

The motion to recommit on H.R. 3971; and

Passage of H.R. 3971, if ordered.

The first electronic vote will be conducted as a 15-minute vote. The second electronic vote will be conducted as a 5-minute vote.

COMMUNITY INSTITUTION MORTGAGE RELIEF ACT OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on the motion to recommit on the bill (H.R. 3971) to amend the Truth in Lending Act and the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974 to modify the requirements for community financial institutions with respect to certain rules relating to mortgage loans, and for other purposes, offered by the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS), on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk will redesignate the motion.

The Clerk redesignated the motion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion to recommit.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 190, nays 233, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 674]

YEAS—190

Adams	Carbajal	Crowley
Aguilar	Cárdenas	Cuellar
Barragán	Carson (IN)	Cummings
Bass	Cartwright	Davis (CA)
Beatty	Castor (FL)	Davis, Danny
Bera	Castro (TX)	DeFazio
Beyer	Chu, Judy	DeGette
Bishop (GA)	Cicilline	Delaney
Blum	Clark (MA)	DeLauro
Blumenauer	Clarke (NY)	DeBene
Blunt Rochester	Clay	Demings
Bonamici	Cleaver	DeSaulnier
Boyle, Brendan	Clyburn	Deutch
F.	Cohen	Dingell
Brady (PA)	Connolly	Doggett
Brown (MD)	Cooper	Doyle, Michael
Brownley (CA)	Correa	F.
Bustos	Costa	Ellison
Butterfield	Courtney	Engel
Capuano	Crist	Eshoo

Espallat Lewis (GA)
 Esty (CT) Lieu, Ted
 Evans Lipinski
 Foster Loeb sack
 Frankel (FL) Lofgren
 Fudge Lowenthal
 Gabbard Lowey
 Gallego Lujan Grisham,
 Garamendi M.
 Gomez Lujan, Ben Ray
 Gonzalez (TX) Lynch
 Gottheimer Maloney,
 Green, Al Carolyn B.
 Green, Gene Maloney, Sean
 Grijalva Matsui
 Hanabusa McCollum
 Hastings McEachin
 Heck McGovern
 Higgins (NY) McNerney
 Himes Meeks
 Hoyer Meng
 Huffman Moore
 Jackson Lee Moulton
 Jayapal Murphy (FL)
 Jeffries Nadler
 Johnson (GA) Napolitano
 Johnson, E. B. Neal
 Jones Nolan
 Kaptur Norcross
 Keating O'Halleran
 Kelly (IL) O'Rourke
 Khanna Pallone
 Kihuen Panetta
 Kildee Pascarell
 Kilmer Payne
 Kind Pelosi
 Krishnamoorthi Perlmutter
 Kuster (NH) Peters
 Langevin Peterson
 Larsen (WA) Pingree
 Larson (CT) Polls
 Lawrence Price (NC)
 Lawson (FL) Quigley
 Lee Raskin
 Levin Rice (NY)

NAYS—233

Abraham Dent
 Aderholt DeSantis
 Allen Diaz-Balart
 Amash Donovan
 Amodei Duffy
 Arrington Duncan (SC)
 Babin Duncan (TN)
 Bacon Dunn
 Banks (IN) Emmer
 Barletta Estes (KS)
 Barr Farenthold
 Barton Faso
 Bergman Ferguson
 Biggs Fitzpatrick
 Bilirakis Fleischmann
 Bishop (MI) Flores
 Bishop (UT) Fortenberry
 Black Foxx
 Blackburn Frelinghuysen
 Bost Gaetz
 Brady (TX) Gallagher
 Brat Garrett
 Brooks (AL) Gianforte
 Brooks (IN) Gibbs
 Buchanan Gohmert
 Buck Goodlatte
 Bucshon Gosar
 Budd Gowdy
 Burgess Granger
 Byrne Graves (GA)
 Calvert Graves (LA)
 Carter (GA) Graves (MO)
 Carter (TX) Griffith
 Chabot Grothman
 Cheney Guthrie
 Coffman Handel
 Cole Harper
 Collins (GA) Harris
 Collins (NY) Hartzler
 Comer Hensarling
 Comstock Herrera Beutler
 Conaway Hice, Jody B.
 Cook Higgins (LA)
 Costello (PA) Hill
 Cramer Holding
 Crawford Hollingsworth
 Culberson Hudson
 Curbelo (FL) Huizenga
 Curtis Hultgren
 Davidson Hunter
 Davis, Rodney Hurd
 Denham Issa

Jenkins (KS)
 Jenkins (WV)
 Johnson (LA)
 Johnson (OH)
 Johnson, Sam
 Jordan
 Joyce (OH)
 Katko
 Kelly (MS)
 Kelly (PA)
 King (IA)
 King (NY)
 Kinzinger
 Knight
 Kustoff (TN)
 Labrador
 LaHood
 LaMalfa
 Lamborn
 Lance
 Latta
 Lewis (MN)
 LoBiondo
 Long
 Loudermilk
 Love
 Lucas
 Luetkemeyer
 MacArthur
 Marchant
 Marino
 Marshall
 Massie
 Mast
 McCarthy
 McCaul
 McClintock
 McHenry
 McKinley
 McMorris
 Rodgers
 McSally
 Meadows
 Meehan
 Messer
 Mitchell
 Moolenaar
 Mooney (WV)
 Mullin
 Newhouse
 Noem
 Norman

Nunes
 Olson
 Palazzo
 Palmer
 Paulsen
 Pearce
 Perry
 Pittenger
 Poe (TX)
 Poliquin
 Posey
 Ratcliffe
 Reed
 Reichert
 Renacci
 Rice (SC)
 Roby
 Roe (TN)
 Rogers (AL)
 Rogers (KY)
 Rohrabacher
 Rokita
 Rooney, Francis
 Rooney, Thomas
 J.
 Ros-Lehtinen
 Roskam
 Ross
 Rothfus
 Rouzer
 Royce (CA)
 Russell
 Rutherford
 Sanford
 Schweikert
 Scott, Austin
 Sensenbrenner
 Sessions
 Shimkus
 Shuster
 Simpson
 Smith (MO)
 Smith (NE)
 Smith (NJ)
 Smith (TX)
 Smucker
 Stefanik
 Stewart
 Stivers
 Taylor
 Tenney
 Thompson (PA)
 Thornberry
 Tiberi

NOT VOTING—8

Bridenstine
 DesJarlais
 Gutierrez
 Kennedy
 Pocan
 Scalise

□ 1702

Messrs. HILL, BILIRAKIS, FARENTHOLD, GRAVES of Missouri, COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, ROSS, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, Messrs. ROSKAM, WALDEN, HURD, Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS, Messrs. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, GOODLATTE, and DUNCAN of Tennessee changed their vote from “yea” to “nay.”

Mr. NOLAN and Ms. MOORE changed their vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So the motion to recommit was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 294, nays 129, not voting 8, as follows:

[Roll No. 675]

YEAS—294

Abraham
 Aderholt
 Aguilar
 Allen
 Amash
 Amodei
 Arrington
 Brat
 Brooks (AL)
 Brooks (IN)
 Buchanan
 Buck
 Bucshon
 Budd
 Burgess
 Barton
 Beatty
 Bera
 Bergman
 Beyer
 Biggs
 Bilirakis
 Bishop (GA)
 Bishop (MI)
 Bishop (UT)
 Black

Blackburn
 Blum
 Bost
 Boyle, Brendan
 F.
 Brady (TX)
 Brat
 Brooks (AL)
 Brooks (IN)
 Buchanan
 Buck
 Bucshon
 Budd
 Cramer
 Crawford
 Cuellar
 Culberson
 Curbelo (FL)
 Curtis
 Davidson
 Davis (CA)
 Davis, Rodney
 DeGette
 Delaney
 DelBene

Denham
 Dent
 DeSantis
 Diaz-Balart
 Donovan
 Duffy
 Duncan (SC)
 Duncan (TN)
 Dunn
 Emmer
 Estes (KS)
 Esty (CT)
 Farenthold
 Faso
 Ferguson
 Fitzpatrick
 Fleischmann
 Flores
 Fortenberry
 Foster
 Foxx
 Frelinghuysen
 Gabbard
 Gaetz
 Gallagher
 Garrett
 Gianforte
 Gibbs
 Gohmert
 Gomez
 Gonzalez (TX)
 Goodlatte
 Gosar
 Gottheimer
 Gowdy
 Granger
 Graves (GA)
 Graves (LA)
 Graves (MO)
 Griffith
 Grothman
 Guthrie
 Hanabusa
 Handel
 Harper
 Harris
 Hartzler
 Heck
 Hensarling
 Herrera Beutler
 Hice, Jody B.
 Higgins (LA)
 Hill
 Himes
 Holding
 Hollingsworth
 Hudson
 Huizenga
 Hultgren
 Hunter
 Hurd
 Issa
 Jenkins (KS)
 Jenkins (WV)
 Johnson (LA)
 Johnson (OH)
 Johnson, Sam
 Jordan
 Joyce (OH)
 Katko
 Keating
 Kelly (MS)
 Kelly (PA)
 Kilmer
 Kind
 King (IA)

NAYS—129

Adams
 Bass
 Blumenauer
 Blunt Rochester
 Bonamici
 Brady (PA)
 Brown (MD)
 Brownley (CA)
 Butterfield
 Capuano
 Cárdenas
 Carson (IN)
 Castor (FL)
 Castro (TX)
 Chu, Judy
 Cicilline
 Clark (MA)
 Clarke (NY)
 Clay
 Cleaver
 Clyburn

Cohen
 Courtney
 Crist
 Crowley
 Cummings
 Davis, Danny
 DeFazio
 DeLauro
 Demings
 DeSaulnier
 Deutch
 Dingell
 Doggett
 Doyle, Michael
 F.
 Ellison
 Engel
 Eshoo
 Espallat
 Evans
 Frankel (FL)

Roby
 Roe (TN)
 Knight
 Rogers (AL)
 Rogers (KY)
 Rohrabacher
 Rokita
 Rooney, Francis
 Rooney, Thomas
 J.
 Ros-Lehtinen
 Roskam
 Ross
 Rothfus
 Rouzer
 Royce (CA)
 Ruppertsberger
 Russell
 Rutherford
 Sanford
 Schneider
 Schrader
 Schweikert
 Scott, Austin
 Scott, David
 Sensenbrenner
 Sessions
 Sherman
 Shimkus
 Shuster
 Simpson
 Sinema
 Smith (MO)
 Smith (NE)
 Smith (NJ)
 Smith (TX)
 Smucker
 Stefanik
 Stewart
 Stivers
 Suozzi
 Taylor
 Tenney
 Thompson (PA)
 Thornberry
 Tiberi
 Tipton
 Torres
 Trott
 Turner
 Upton
 Valadao
 Vargas
 Vela
 Wagner
 Walberg
 Walden
 Walker
 Walorski
 Walters, Mimi
 Paulsen
 Pearce
 Perlmutter
 Perry
 Peters
 Peterson
 Pittenger
 Poe (TX)
 Poliquin
 Polls
 Posey
 Ratcliffe
 Reed
 Reichert
 Renacci
 Rice (NY)
 Rice (SC)

Fudge
 Gallego
 Garamendi
 Green, Al
 Green, Gene
 Grijalva
 Hastings
 Higgins (NY)
 Hoyer
 Huffman
 Jackson Lee
 Jayapal
 Jeffries
 Johnson (GA)
 Johnson, E. B.
 Jones
 Kaptur
 Kelly (IL)
 Khanna
 Kihuen
 Kildee

Langevin	Nolan	Serrano
Larson (CT)	Norcross	Shea-Porter
Lawrence	O'Rourke	Sires
Lee	Pallone	Slaughter
Levin	Panetta	Smith (WA)
Lewis (GA)	Pascrell	Soto
Lofgren	Payne	Speier
Lowenthal	Pelosi	Swalwell (CA)
Lowey	Pingree	Takano
Lujan, Ben Ray	Price (NC)	Thompson (CA)
Lynch	Quigley	Thompson (MS)
Maloney,	Raskin	Titus
Carolyn B.	Richmond	Tonko
Matsui	Rosen	Tsongas
McCollum	Roybal-Allard	Veasey
McEachin	Ruiz	Velázquez
McGovern	Rush	Visclosky
McNerney	Ryan (OH)	Waters, Maxine
Meng	Sánchez	Watson Coleman
Moore	Sarbanes	Welch
Nadler	Schakowsky	Wilson (FL)
Napolitano	Schiff	Yarmuth
Neal	Scott (VA)	

NOT VOTING—8

Bridenstine	Kennedy	Sewell (AL)
DesJarlais	Pocan	Walz
Gutiérrez	Scalise	

□ 1709

Ms. MOORE changed her vote from "yea" to "nay."

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. SCALISE. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "Nay" on Rollcall No. 674 and "Yea" on Rollcall No. 675.

ISIS IN AFRICA

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as ISIS loses ground in Syria and Iraq, we must remain vigilant. There is a growing terrorist threat in Africa. Between January and September of 2016, the African continent suffered at least 1,426 incidents of terrorism-related violence.

Terrorism is a major challenge to peace, security, and development in Africa. Recently, the threat has grown to directly impact U.S. servicemembers serving in Africa.

Last May, a Navy SEAL was killed in an operation against al-Qaida affiliate al Shabaab, the first U.S. servicemember killed in action in Somalia since the 1993 infamous Black Hawk Down incident. Last month, an ambush by Islamist militants in Niger left four U.S. Green Berets killed. Recently, the U.S. conducted its first airstrikes against ISIS in Somalia.

Mr. Speaker, the writing is on the wall. The terrorist cancer in Africa is metastasizing. It is on its way to becoming a full-blown threat to African and American interests.

Having been displaced by war in Syria and Iraq, ISIS is finding a new home in Africa to carry out its reign of terror, and we must be mindful and vigilant.

And that is just the way it is.

□ 1715

RECOGNIZING MONTEREY COUNTY AND SANTA CRUZ COUNTY FARM BUREAUS

(Mr. PANETTA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Farm Bureaus of Monterey County and Santa Cruz County.

This year, those farm bureaus will mark 100 years of serving our agriculture communities across the central coast of California. We know that those in agriculture are consistently evolving as they constantly contend with Mother Nature, mandates, immigration, and the ever-changing market.

Fortunately, the local farm bureaus' leadership and consultation has always been there to help our over 600 farmers stay competitive and keep our communities strong. The farm bureaus are an essential ingredient as to why our number one industry on the central coast is agriculture and why my home can claim the title of being the berry bowl and salad bowl of the world.

I thank and recognize the Santa Cruz County and Monterey County Farm Bureaus for their past, present, and future work for our agriculture industry and for our communities that feed our families throughout our Nation and the world.

RECOGNIZING FORMER GEORGIA STATE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN YATES

(Mr. CARTER of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the life of former Georgia State Representative John Yates, who passed away on December 11 at the age of 96.

Representing Griffin, Georgia, just south of Atlanta, he was first elected to the Georgia General Assembly in 1988, and over time became one of the most inspiring officials in the State.

When he retired from government, Representative Yates was the only World War II veteran serving in the Georgia General Assembly. He was drafted into the Army in 1942, and flew a Piper Cub airplane, a small plane with a top speed of less than 100 miles an hour. He flew 200 missions adjusting artillery fire on the enemy, including at the Battle of the Bulge, earning six Air Medals and four battle stars.

After the war, he went back to school to earn his college degree and embarked on a 35-year journey with Ford Motor Company, eventually becoming a depot manager.

Representative Yates served the State of Georgia with the most humble attitude and went to great lengths to help Georgia's veterans. Anyone who was lucky enough to know Representa-

tive Yates could learn from his attitude, knowledge, and experience.

Mr. Speaker, I had the honor and privilege of serving with Representative Yates. He was a great American, a true American hero, and a fine man. He will be missed.

CONDEMNING THE SLAVE TRADE IN LIBYA

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, by now, we have all seen the horrifying video of a slave auction in Libya. It is outrageous. Migrants and refugees, most of them Black Africans, are being preyed upon, held in detention camps, and bought and sold like property.

Mr. Speaker, the United States cannot stand by as an idle spectator to the plague of slavery in Libya. People are not property.

Last week, members of the Congressional Black Caucus and I met with Libya's Ambassador. She agreed that the Libyan Government will conduct a transparent investigation, but they do not have the capacity to do so. That does not absolve the United States of its responsibilities.

We must immediately investigate allegations of slavery and forced labor in Libya. We need to impose sanctions if Libya fails to end slave auctions and forced labor. We must ensure the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development are adequately staffed to respond to the situation in Libya.

Mr. Speaker, Congress should adopt the bipartisan H. Res. 644, which will do all these things and more.

ATTACK ON RULE OF LAW AND DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ARRINGTON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I take the floor tonight, along with many of my colleagues, to fight back against an attack on the rule of law and our democratic institutions.

Right now, the investigations into Donald Trump and the prior investigation into Hillary Clinton have been infected with the virus of severe bias.

Hillary Clinton went under investigation for the mishandling of classified information and her dealings through the Clinton Foundation, which was essentially investigated by her own fan club. Meanwhile, Robert Mueller obtained his team by fishing in the never-Trump aquarium.

Only through the antidote of transparency can we end this erosion of the rule of law and restore the American people's confidence in the institutions that we must trust to live in a civilized society.

The people in this country have a right to know what has happened within the FBI, the Department of Justice, and within Robert Mueller's team as he probes the President and his transition. But there is so much in hearing after hearing that members of the Judiciary Committee, the Intelligence Committee, and the Oversight Committee have been told we don't have a right to know as the Representatives of the people.

Let's begin with the tarmac meeting between Loretta Lynch and former President Bill Clinton.

We as the American people apparently don't have a right to know what was truly discussed. In information and reports that have been submitted to the Congress, there is extensive redacted information. So we don't get to see the substance of those communications between Loretta Lynch and former President Bill Clinton. It is deeply troubling.

We also don't get to know what the informant would tell us who had information about Russia's attempts to impair the United States' uranium assets through the now infamous Uranium One deal.

We know that there was an informant. We now know that informant wanted to come forward and give information about bribery and kickbacks that undermine America's interests.

Unfortunately, people at the Justice Department who still remain in substantial positions of power went and sought a gag order so that the Congress wouldn't learn what was happening and so the American people wouldn't learn what was happening.

Then we learn that an inspector general who wanted to raise the flag of concern regarding the deeply troubling conduct of Hillary Clinton was essentially shut down.

Mr. McCullough has now given interviews upon his departure from the intelligence community indicating that he went to James Clapper. He said that these mishaps, these potential violations of law, were serious and that they put America's national security in jeopardy. What he heard back from Mr. Clapper was that these revelations would create heartburn for the Clinton campaign.

It is ludicrous, when we have got potential bribes and kickbacks, and we have got the Clinton Foundation functioning essentially as a passthrough money laundering operation, that we wouldn't have all of the information that an inspector general would bring forward.

Mr. McCullough gave interviews where now he said that his family, his job, his agency, his mission was threatened by people in the deep state. That is not the America we need to live in. Transparency is the antidote to this type of corruption and this type of truly intolerable conduct.

Here is what we do know. We do know that the Democratic National Committee was off paying for a sala-

cious and false dossier from the Fusion GPS company about the current President, Donald Trump. We don't know whether or not the FBI contributed funds toward that cause.

Think about that for a moment. When we asked the Attorney General and the FBI Director, were taxpayer funds used to go and obtain a dossier to discredit the President both before and after his election, we were told that we don't have a right to know and that the taxpayers don't have a right to know if their money was used in this way. It is troubling.

We also know that Nellie Ohr, the wife of a top Department of Justice official, Bruce Ohr, was actually getting paid by Fusion GPS, the company that ultimately produced this false dossier.

If that is not a conflict of interest, if that doesn't impair the credibility of this investigation, I don't know what does.

We also don't know who is in charge. We asked questions to the Attorney General regarding the nature of his recusal. Can the Attorney General appoint a second special counsel to evaluate the Clinton Foundation?

We got contradictory answers.

So as we prepare for the Deputy Attorney General Mr. Rosenstein's testimony before the Judiciary Committee tomorrow, we don't know if it is Mr. Rosenstein who can appoint a special counsel. We don't know if it is the Attorney General who has the power to do that.

We do know that the American people want it. Harvard University released a poll that said over 60 percent of the American people believe there should be a second special counsel to investigate Clinton and the Clinton Foundation, largely as a consequence of this intractable bias that we continue to see in the intelligence community.

So let's look at that bias as it is applied to Mr. Mueller and his team.

We have no idea how Bob Mueller picked the members of his team. I asked FBI Director Christopher Ray: Did people get on the Mueller team because they hate President Trump? Was there any vetting? Was there any review? Did we look at political contributions, political activity or activism from these folks?

The FBI Director would not answer my question.

So here we are, unclear as to whether or not the standard to investigate the President was a preexisting bias against him.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that it is a coincidence that the Mueller team is populated by people who bring that bias with them and who seemingly have acted upon it.

Mr. Weissmann, who is Mueller's number two, attended Hillary Clinton's election night party. Are you really telling me we couldn't find a number two in the Mueller investigation who wasn't at Hillary Clinton's election night party? For goodness sake.

We also know that Mr. Weissmann sent emails to Sally Yates, praising her for directly defying an order from the President. That should have disqualified Mr. Weissmann, but we don't know if that was, in fact, the qualifying factor that led him to be on this team.

Aaron Zebley is also a member of the Mueller team. He represented Justin Cooper, who set up the Hillary Clinton email server. Could we not have found people for the Mueller team who were not involved in setting up an email server for Hillary Clinton?

He also used a hammer to smash BlackBerry's, destroying evidence. Mr. Zebley may be a witness, yet he is on the Mueller team.

Jeannie Rhee. She defended the Clinton Foundation against FOIA requests and now is involved in persecuting the President. In fact, over half of the members of the Mueller team have financially contributed to the campaigns of Barack Obama or Hillary Clinton, or both, and none of them contributed to Donald Trump.

I don't think it is a coincidence. I think it is ridiculous that the Congress doesn't have any information about how these people were selected, how they were vetted, how they were approved.

But it is not just the Mueller team. It is also the Department of Justice. Bruce Ohr, the head of counter intelligence, meets with Christopher Steele, who is the author of the dossier during the campaign. Then after the campaign, he meets with Glenn Simpson.

All the while, Bruce Ohr, working at the Department of Justice, has a spouse getting paid by the very people developing these lies about the President to discredit him. It is smoking-gun evidence of bias and conflict of interest.

But it is not just the Mueller team and the Department of Justice. It is also the FBI. Andrew McCabe is the current Deputy Director of the FBI. When he was the assistant agent in charge of the Washington field office, he was sending out emails just weeks before the 2016 election saying that the Hillary Clinton investigation would be given special status, that it would be handled by a small team at headquarters.

What that means is that Hillary Clinton got different treatment than any other American who would have been charged with the mishandling of classified information in the Washington, D.C., area.

Absolutely outrageous. That special treatment didn't lead to a more rigorous review. We know now that James Comey was drafting the exoneration statement before even interviewing key witnesses, including Hillary Clinton herself.

□ 1730

Then you have Peter Strzok, also at the FBI. Mr. Strzok has now been discredited and demoted because he was sending 10,000 text messages back and

forth with his mistress about how much he loved Hillary Clinton and hated President Trump. I don't think it is a coincidence that Mr. Strzok is the person who went in and changed the term "grossly negligent," which is a crime, to "extremely careless," in the exonerated statement about Hillary Clinton.

The Attorney General needs to do his job. He needs to appoint a special counsel to investigate Hillary Clinton because she was never investigated in earnest in the first place. He needs to tell Robert Mueller to put up or shut up.

If there is evidence of collusion, let us see it. We are almost a year into this investigation, and the only thing I see is a bias that continues to erode our institutions and our rule of law, and this Congress should stand for it no more.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY).

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ), for bringing this issue to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, this can all be cleared up, pretty quickly, with a little bit of transparency and with a little bit of sunlight. It comes down to the issue of: Do we have impartial justice in this country or don't we?

We are all familiar with Lady Justice. She has a blindfold over her eyes, she is holding the scale, and the scale is straight across. It is not leaning one way or the other. But, in this case, it seems—and I am going to say that kind of tongue-in-cheek—it seems like it is, like the scale is not right across, Mr. Speaker. It is heavily on one side, and the other side is way up in the air.

And let me just make a couple of points:

Deputy Director McCabe refers to the Clinton email investigation as "special."

Why is it special?

Where is it on that scale?

Is it up high or is it down low?

Why is it called special?

Why did Secretary Clinton have a team from headquarters investigate her, as opposed to the Washington field office?

Think about this:

If the FBI called you, it wouldn't be for a meeting or an interview. It would be called your deposition. You would sit there with your lawyer, and you would answer questions. And it wouldn't be when it was convenient for you. It would be when it was convenient for the FBI.

Secretary Clinton gets to have a meeting with the FBI for an interview on a Saturday morning of a holiday weekend. Now, contrast that on the scales of justice with Paul Manafort. Paul Manafort gets his home broken into in the middle of the night and dragged out of bed while he and his wife are sleeping. Something doesn't seem right to me.

You talk about the meeting on the tarmac. The FBI, in their emails, it

was revealed that they wanted to get the agent that divulged the fact that that meeting occurred out on the tarmac. They weren't interested in what the meeting was about just days before Secretary Clinton was going to be deposed before this House of Representatives and be questioned and interviewed about her role in Benghazi.

Why does that happen?

It seems like the scales of justice, once again, are tipped.

Peter Strzok. He interviewed Heather Samuelson, Cheryl Mills, Bryan Pagliano, and Paul Combetta, and they all got immunity. They all got immunity.

Who gives somebody immunity without anything in return?

Okay, they got immunity. We get it. We want to know what was on the other side of that equation. I mean, this is not to apologize for, or to stick up for, Mike Flynn or for Paul Manafort. If they have committed crimes, that needs to be dealt with appropriately. Lying, period, is never appropriate.

But they didn't get this deal. These folks did get the deal. And, at the same time while they got the deal, we know via their email and interviews that they actually did lie to the FBI. Some of these folks lied to the FBI, yet Michael Flynn pleads guilty, and these guys and gals get immunity.

Do the scales of justice, Mr. Speaker, seem like they are a little bit askew?

Mr. Combetta—if that is how you pronounce his name—we know that he was out there searching for ways on the internet about how to scrub a computer. Nothing to see here, right? That seems a little odd, doesn't it?

Cheryl Mills, she got immunity, allegedly, to give up her laptop. So she got immunity; we got that. She can't be prosecuted. We got the laptop. Shouldn't the American people know what was on the laptop? Why is that information not available? Why is it that this Congress, this jurisdiction of oversight, as applied in the Constitution, has to beg and cajole the FBI and the Department of Justice to provide documents so that we can see what happened, so that we can know, so that the American people and their representatives can know how this dossier—if you want to call it that—was constructed and how it was used? Why must we beg for that information, and why can't we get it?

Mr. Speaker, this can all be cleared up; just provide the information. There doesn't have to be another special prosecutor. Mr. Mueller can continue with his investigation and find the truth because we all want the truth. We want the truth that is impartial, not something that is fabricated because we now have an FBI that is pursuing individuals, as opposed to crimes.

The American people need to know that this isn't a tinhorn dictatorship and that we don't have government officials using the power of the Federal Government to work against their po-

litical rivals. They need to know that they can trust their FBI, and right now it doesn't seem like they can have confidence in that.

It seems like if you are on the wrong side of the scale, Mr. Speaker, it is a bad day for you. But if you are connected and you have people working for you like—oh, I don't know—Peter Strzok, Bruce Ohr, and his wife now, Andrew Weissmann, or Jeannie Rhee, I mean, as the days go on, we just keep on finding out more and more and more. And we don't find it out because they are offering it. We find it out because we have to pull it from them and just beg them and require them to come in here and force the information out of them. That is not how this is supposed to work.

We need to have confidence in our FBI, and we need to have confidence in our Department of Justice. American citizens need to have confidence in their judicial system to know that the blindfold is still on Lady Justice, that the scales are even, that we are all going to be treated evenly, and that crimes are going to be investigated, not individuals. And that there is not going to be some kind of a witch hunt or a lynch mob mentality at the Federal Government level against people with whom the political ruling class disagrees.

If it requires another special counsel, so be it. If not, it would be great if we could just clear all of this up by providing the information that this House of Representatives and the American people demand. There is no reason to keep it. It is not classified; it is not sensitive. It is information that all of us need to know so we know how our Federal Government is operating and who is being truthful with us. And then we can have confidence in the fidelity of our FBI and our Department of Justice.

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JODY B. HICE).

Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ) for yielding.

I am greatly honored to be here to participate in this important discussion. We all want transparency, and for that to be in our government is critical to all of us. I am honored to be on the Oversight and Government Reform Committee where this is part of the responsibilities entrusted to us.

But after repeated scandals and misconduct, it is patently obvious to me that former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton plays by her own rules, and simply does so because of her own status, her own positions of power and influence in the government, and has been in those roles for decades. She has been getting a free pass to follow or ignore the law as she chooses, whereas it seems, on the other hand, as has already been discussed this evening, President Trump and his administration seems to get a special counsel just for sneezing. It is insane what is going

on, and we, as Americans, must prioritize equal justice under the law.

Lady Justice must remain blind, and her scales must remain balanced. This is a fundamental principle for all of us as Americans—something we cherish and something we hold on to—and we are watching it change right before our eyes. It seems as though Lady Justice is peeking underneath that blindfold, and that is simply unacceptable.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored that we are coming to draw attention to this horror and this change that is taking place. The principle of blind justice is one of the most basic fundamental principles that we have in this country, and without it we are watching individuals like Mrs. Clinton and her allies act above the law and get away with things they simply ought not be getting away with. And the truth is, a breach of justice for one is a breach of justice for all of us.

Let me give you a quick example. Back in August of 2016, The New York Times reported on generous foreign donations to the Clinton Foundation, and this was done while Hillary Clinton was Secretary of State. That, in itself, ought to raise some red flags, shouldn't it? Foreign countries. And then we find out that many of these foreign countries had already tremendous human rights violations: Kuwait, for example, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and several others, just to name a few, yet they are giving tons of money to the Clinton Foundation, while she is Secretary of State.

And then the Clintons say: Well, we were open; we disclosed all of the information about who was giving what. They tried to convince us that they went above and beyond to disclose their donors, but they did not do so.

For example, we found they failed to disclose \$2.35 million in donations from a family foundation that was linked to the mining company, Uranium One, which we happen to be talking about tonight.

Well, who is Uranium One?

Of course, we know by now that this is a company that was taken over by Russia's state-owned nuclear energy firm, Rosatom, another decision that was signed off by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

The dots are pretty easy to start connecting. We, at least, have some red flags here.

Furthermore, there was a whopping \$145 million given to the Clinton Foundation by Uranium One's owners. I don't know about everyone else here, but I would certainly know it if I received over \$100 million from Russian donors. Talk about Russian collusion. Shall we talk about it? Let's have this discussion. That is the whole point of what we are talking about here this evening. I would also be very concerned that someone receiving this kind of money was free of bias or coercion when they are getting this type of money.

But let me land the plane here. There is a full-fledged investigation going on

here into President Trump's interactions with Russia, but where is the investigation on Hillary Clinton's activities with the Russians?

The Obama administration attempted to sweep this situation under the rug. They let her off the hook. That is a disgrace. It is in complete disregard for our Nation's laws. And, perhaps, that in itself ought to be something else that is looked into: the Obama administration's role in all of this.

I am grateful that Attorney General Sessions is taking these allegations seriously. I am hopeful that we can get to the bottom of this and ensure that justice is served.

The FBI must investigate this thoroughly. We must have transparency to make sure that Hillary Clinton is held accountable and reaffirm that no one is above the law.

Enough is enough. We have got to go into this further.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the good gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ) for his leadership on this.

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JORDAN).

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, did the Comey FBI and the Obama Justice Department coordinate with the Democratic Party to go after the Republican Party? Did the FBI and the Justice Department work hand in glove with the Clinton campaign to go after the Trump campaign? That is the fundamental question. That is the fundamental question.

And think about what we have learned in the last several weeks:

First, we learned that the DNC and the Clinton campaign paid for the dossier. The DNC and the Clinton campaign, which we now know are one and the same, paid for the dossier. They first paid their law firm, who then paid Fusion GPS, who then paid Christopher Steele, who then paid Russians. This is a great irony.

We have Special Counsel Mueller investigating possible coordination between the Trump campaign and Russia to influence the 2016 Presidential election, yet we know, just as sure as I am standing on the House floor tonight, the Clinton campaign paid Russians to do what? Influence the 2016 Presidential election.

They paid for the dossier. It has been reported—and I think it happened—but it has been reported the dossier became the basis to secure warrants at the FISA court. In other words, they took this dossier, this disproven dossier, fake news, National Enquirer, garbage dossier, they dressed it all up, they spruced it all up, they took it to the FISA court and then got a judge to say: Okay, that is enough to spy on Americans.

That is what has been reported. And all of the evidence points to that actually taking place.

So they used this dossier, this disproven dossier, to spy on Americans.

And then what have we learned in just the past 5 days?

□ 1745

Bruce Ohr, the Associate Deputy Attorney General; Bruce Ohr, four doors down from Mr. Rosenstein; Bruce Ohr, the top guy at the Justice Department, in 2016, during the campaign, is meeting with the guy who wrote the dossier, meeting with Christopher Steele.

Bruce Ohr, the top guy at the Justice Department, the Associate Deputy Attorney General, and four doors down from Mr. Rosenstein is also meeting with Glenn Simpson, the guy who founded Fusion GPS, the people who paid for the dossier.

So you have got Bruce Ohr, the top official at the Justice Department, hanging out with the guy who wrote and the guy who paid for the dossier during the campaign.

Here is the kicker. I mean, you can't make this stuff up. Here is the kicker. At the same time that Bruce Ohr is meeting with him, we learn that Bruce Ohr's wife is being paid by Fusion GPS, working for the people who paid Christopher Steele to write the dossier that we believe was taken to the FISA court to secure warrants to spy on Americans associated with the Trump campaign.

We know all that happened. That is all public. We know that is the truth. Now, what Mr. GAETZ is saying—and this is why I appreciate the work that Mr. GAETZ and my colleagues are doing on this—and what we are saying: Look, give us the documents. Answer our questions, for crying out loud. And if you won't, then appoint a special counsel—a second special counsel so the American people can get the truth.

Because if this, in fact, happened—and I think it did—where you had the Justice Department, the FBI working with one campaign to go after the other campaign, working with the Clinton campaign to go after President Trump's campaign, then that is as wrong as it gets. That is something that should never take place in the United States of America.

That is why this is so important. That is why the work that Congressman GAETZ and other colleagues are doing is so important.

Again, if you are not going to do the job, Justice Department, at least appoint a second special counsel so we can get answers and we can hold people accountable who did this in this great country.

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JORDAN) for joining us on the floor this evening. I particularly thank him for his work in the Judiciary Committee and the Oversight Committee. The gentleman is correct. We just want our questions answered. We just want to know: Did these things occur that would seem to evidence collusion on the part of the Democratic Party and the Clinton campaign with Russians to influence the outcome of the election?

But our own Justice Department and our own FBI won't answer those questions. Tomorrow we have Mr. Rosenstein before the Judiciary Committee. I hope he does give us answers.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BIGGS), a fellow member of the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. BIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GAETZ) for leading this Special Order tonight, and I am grateful for his work on this very important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you that I am very appreciative of my colleagues who also continue to work on this very important task, because this reminds me of playing a basketball game where you get there and there is a five-on-five game, except for it is not really five-on-five because the other team has got the referees on their side, they have got the scorekeeper on their side, they have got the statistics on their side, they have got the person that runs the clock on their side.

That is really what has happened here. We know that is what has happened here because of the conflict of interest and bias that has taken over and controls the Robert Mueller special investigations team. That is a team that is biased. He has got conflict of interest. Nobody is going to get a fair shake from that team.

Why is that?

Well, let's just think about this. A couple of weeks ago, we had the FBI—excuse me—Attorney General Jeff Sessions come in. He is a great guy. I asked him specifically: Do you have any procedure to vet conflict of interest or bias on Mueller's special team or in the Department of Justice?

He said: No, we don't. We don't have that.

He doesn't have a question there. He doesn't have a process. He says: It is up to each individual to determine if they have got that conflict of interest or bias.

Well, we had Director Wray in last week. I asked him the same question. He said basically the same thing: No, we don't have a process.

Mueller doesn't have a process. In fact, it is as if the process is you need to have a conflict or bias in order to get on Mueller's special counsel team. That is what this is stacked up to be.

Well, that is where we are today. And tomorrow, when Deputy Rosenstein comes in, I am looking forward to asking him the same questions because there is conflict and there is bias. My colleagues have all iterated that tonight. It just happens over and over and over again. To get on that team, you have to have a conflict or bias.

Well, so what else is important? What else has come out of these hearings?

Well, I tell you what else has come out. I said to Director Wray: Look, we know there is a problem here. Attorney General Sessions told us that the responsibility of the person involved is to

make sure they don't have a conflict. We know that there is a huge cloud that sits right there.

Well, this is outrageous. No firm in the private sector would ever allow that to go on. But here we have this—it is like a drip, drip, drip from a faucet. Every day or two, here is another conflict of interest that comes out. Maybe Mr. Strzok, maybe Mr. Ohr, maybe Mr. Ohr's wife, maybe Mr. Weissmann, maybe Mr. Zebbley, maybe Mr. COOPER, maybe Jeannie Rhee. It just goes on and on.

You know what? This is ridiculous. So I asked Director Wray: Look, you have got the inspector general looking at the Hillary Clinton investigation right now and all these other investigations. What will you do if he says there was irregularities in the Hillary Clinton investigation?

He said: I would try to "unring the bell."

Think about that. He says he is willing to unring the bell. I asked him what he meant. So he talked about personnel decisions. Maybe someone needs to be let go, disciplined, retrained, whatever. Maybe they will come up with a process to vet conflicts of interest and bias investigations.

But I pressed him a little bit harder. I asked him: When you get to unring the bell, if you have irregularities in the Hillary Clinton investigation, will you commit to reopen the investigation?

Now, he didn't commit, but he indicated very strongly he would reopen that Hillary Clinton investigation.

That is what needs to happen now. We know that there were irregularities. We know that that is what the inspector general is going to find. And I tell you this: We have got to stop making this administration play a stacked team when the other team has nothing but biased and conflicted investigators who control the clock, who control the score, who control the statistics, who control the referees. That is what you have going on here, and it must stop, and it must stop now.

With that in mind, if Attorney General Sessions, if Director Wray, and if Mr. Rosenstein do not provide the information Congress has asked, they should be held in contempt.

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS) for his leadership on the Judiciary Committee. He is absolutely right. We have to get answers to these questions. And if we don't, then Congress can never have confidence in the outcome of any investigation. And if we can't have confidence, then our constituents, the American people, certainly can't either.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT), another member of the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the concerns of my friends here in Congress because this is just incredible.

You know, many of us have read, understood what happened during Watergate, and we thought surely there have been enough things put in as checks to prevent an administration from totally co-opting the Department of Justice. No one President should be able to have an administration that is powerful enough that it could be a self-sustaining party where all of the powers, whether it is the IRS that has people in key places that prevent people from guilt giving, for example, proper tax status to opponents of an administration so that they stand a better chance of being defeated in running for a second election.

It happened in the Obama administration. And to the great embarrassment or what should be embarrassment of the Obama administration, of the IRS, and of the United States Congress, nothing was done. It appears crimes were committed. Nothing was done.

We are just agnostic.

How could this happen?

Surely the DOJ would jump into the IRS and correct this and stop this so that the IRS could not be weaponized as a political tool. I mean, Nixon may have dreamed of that at some point, but we are not aware of it.

I mean, it is just hard to believe that anybody would anticipate using the powers of government in such a flagrant form as we are finding out almost every day now. New allegations, not just—not allegations; new facts show that corruption and political animus and anything but justice was being conducted for a number of years in the Department of Justice.

You know, as an assistant district attorney in east Texas, as a judge getting to know and hearing so many different Federal agents testify, most people felt like, gosh, if the FBI comes in, these are the guys in the white hats. But much of America has seen what can only be styled as real corruption that has turned those white hats into a stinking brown for some of the top people.

We heard Christopher Wray, the FBI Director, saying: You know, I think of the FBI and I think about these thousands of great Federal agents across the country who care about their country and protecting people's lives and protecting the law.

Well, yeah, I think about that, too, until my mind comes back here to Washington, and not just a swamp, but areas that have become a cesspool. It is unbelievable to think—I mean, I saw "All the President's Men" the other night about Watergate and Deep Throat. And as I watched, oh, my gosh, you mean somebody in the White House may have had contact with somebody that may have had funds that could be used?

I mean, you look at what is coming out in the news every day and it makes that look like Keystone Cops—nothing compared to the extent that this administration used the Justice Department.

And going back to the IRS, what did Rosenstein or all these other great Justice Department officials do for us in cleaning up the mess at the IRS?

Nothing, nothing, nothing.

What did Eric Holder and Loretta Lynch do to clean things up?

Well, they just kept dumping more and more dirt in that washing machine.

Just when you thought it couldn't get any worse, then you find that a reporter sees the husband of someone being investigated in a clandestine meeting, in an area they thought nobody would notice.

And what do they want to do at the Justice Department?

We find out they want to go after that reporter. They want to go after that reporter because this reporter actually was reporting some things that might help get some things cleaned up.

They say: We don't want things cleaned up. We want to keep our little cesspool tight and friendly, where we know all the players and all the swamp rats.

We have got to have a massive clean out of what has been happening, but it is not happening.

□ 1800

Then we find out, gee, there was this investigation regarding Russia trying to violate the law, pay bribes, pay pay-offs, anything they could do to corner the market on uranium and get United States uranium in their own control. And, gee, who ends up having their fingerprints on that? A guy named Rosenstein.

In fact, then you see one of the people involved in the investigation of corruption and uranium and payoffs, well, there is Rod Rosenstein's name. Now, he has an assistant sign for him asking the judge to seal the records so we can't know exactly what all was done by the FBI.

It is kind of like we find out there is someone, the undercover agent that the FBI was using, that the Justice Department was using, and they get an agreement, a nondisclosure agreement. I mean, the only reason I can think of they would want a nondisclosure agreement at the FBI is so that the informant wouldn't turn around and talk about how dirty they have been. I mean, why would they get a nondisclosure agreement?

I might expect the guy who was the informant demanding a nondisclosure agreement from the FBI and from the Justice Department: You can't talk about what all I did; you can't talk about the things I did because the people I was working undercover for you on, they might try to kill me, so I demand a nondisclosure agreement from the Justice Department, from the FBI, so you won't disclose things that will get me killed.

But, no, that is not what happened. Under the Obama administration, Loretta Lynch "Injustice Department," we have a nondisclosure agreement

that the person who risked his life couldn't disclose what was going on. Sounds like somebody, to me, at the FBI and the Justice Department had a pretty dirty conscience and they didn't want to be outed. And at every turn: Oh, well, that was sealed. Oh, well, that is a nondisclosure agreement. Oh, you can't have access to that.

The FBI and the Justice Department and people that we have been questioning have really kind of gotten themselves in a position where they are above the law. They are above Congress. And in this country, the branch that the Founders thought would have the least control ever—that was the judiciary; they are small; they don't really have any power—they are legislating and running the executive branch from under their robes.

At the same time, you have got the executive branch and the Department of Justice that has become a new playground for people who want to write like Kafka, ginning up charges, knocking down doors in the wee hours of the morning: Oh, were they a threat?

Well, no, not really, but we just need to intimidate them. It is what we do in the Justice Department nowadays. We are the Department of intimidation.

I am telling you, Mr. Speaker, there has got to be a material change. There has got to be. There are too many people currently in the Justice Department and the top of the FBI—not these fine young agents across the country who have given everything they had, even though Mueller removed their ability to have wise counsel because he got rid of the long-toothed people that had the experience and the wisdom to know how to bring these agents along. He purged the training materials so FBI agents could not know how to discern if somebody had been radicalized.

There is just so much, that almost needs to start from scratch; and we are having to deal with the players like Rosenstein who have been in that system as they were part of the process while it was corroding and, really, infecting.

I thank my friends for caring enough about what is going on to stand up and raise Cain. But, like I said, you know, just when you think, well, that has got to be the final shoe dropping, then we have this story that the wife of the demoted DOJ official actually worked for the firm that put together, was behind, the anti-Trump dossier that we believe may very likely have been used in order to surveil the Trump campaign, in order to use the DOJ, working in collusion with not only Russia, but also the Hillary Clinton campaign, in order to elect a candidate who had no chance otherwise.

Well, a funny thing happened on the way to using the DOJ and Fusion GPS and the Russians in order to get Hillary Clinton elected—she didn't get elected. But that certainly doesn't owe anything to Nellie Ohr or Bruce Ohr or these people who have been occupying the Department of Justice as it tainted

and turned from, what Christopher Wray says, an F that stood for "fidelity" to, now, an I that stands for "infidelity."

Let's get back to fidelity in the Justice Department. Let's get back to an incorruptible Justice Department. I am hoping and praying we are heading that direction, but I am just not seeing it yet.

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas. His perspective as a former prosecutor and former judge certainly sheds a tremendous amount of light on the stark days that we found ourselves in with this biased effort against the President of the United States.

I would also like to thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JORDAN), the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. PERRY), the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JODY B. HICE), and the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. BIGGS) for their contributions not only to this Special Order, but to this critical discussion we are having in the country.

I will conclude with this, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow, the Deputy Attorney General will raise his right hand and swear to be truthful before the Judiciary Committee, and we will ask these tough questions about coordination with Democrats and the DNC and, potentially, the FBI to gin up this false information about the President.

We will ask why a senior official at the Department of Justice had a spouse who was working for the company that was trying to discredit our President both before and after the election. And I hope he doesn't give the same answers that we heard from the Director of the FBI, Mr. Wray.

Mr. Wray said in response to almost all these questions: Well, we have got an inspector general. Inspector generals sniff around all these things, and if there is something wrong, we will make reforms after we hear back.

The time is now. The danger to our country is clear and present if we allow our duly-elected President to be undermined by these unfair and biased tactics. So I am hopeful that we will move past the jargon and just give straight answers to the American people to these very legitimate questions that so many of our constituents are asking.

We should also remember that the inspector general process is far from perfect. We heard from an inspector general, Mr. McCullough, who said that, when he brought forward claims, he was threatened, his family was threatened, his job was threatened, his agency was threatened, and that he did not have an opportunity to tell the American people the truth.

Mr. Speaker, the American people deserve the truth. The truth is that there was no collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia. If there was any collusion, it was the Democrats, it was the DNC, and it was this nexus between Mr. Ohr and his spouse working for the very people who were engaged in these devious tactics.

We deserve better, and we are going to be demanding better tomorrow in the Judiciary Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE IN CONGRESS?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, one of the tasks of having the second Special Order Hour is to find myself sitting here in this Chamber listening to the most absurd, ridiculous conversation that I think I have ever heard anywhere. My esteemed colleagues were here for the last hour in a different world, in a completely different universe, not of this world, but a different universe. And I am thinking: What in the world are they saying?

By my recollection, every one of our intelligence agencies said that Russia was involved in the campaign and developing information that was supporting the current President. I am thinking: I think that is what I heard over the last 9, 10, almost 14 months now. And yet my colleagues are up here and in a different world.

I will tell you what it is all about. This wasn't the subject matter that I was going to talk to tonight, but it was really about another scam, another scheme that is being perpetrated. This is all about, this last hour's discussion was all about somehow turning the table so that Special Counsel Mueller is demeaned, his work is somehow not authentic so that the investigation that is coming closer and closer to the Oval Office is discredited, setting the stage for what may very, very well be an extremely important task that this House has.

As that investigation continues, we will hear even more shrill discussions from the President's supporters tearing down that investigation, undermining the integrity of it, so that when that task comes to the House of Representatives in an impeachment resolution, they will simply say: Well, his entire investigation is discredited and, therefore, we are not going to proceed.

The American public isn't buying it, gentlemen. The American public is not blind. They are not deaf. They are listening, and they are understanding that an honest investigation is underway, based upon what our intelligence agencies discovered, based upon the fact—the fact—that the Russians did hack the DNC and did hack the chairman of the Hillary Clinton campaign and then weaponized those emails that were stolen. That is a fact, gentlemen, and you cannot wash away that fact.

And from there, we now have a special prosecutor, a special counsel in place who is carrying on an investigation, and indictments have come for-

ward and penalties have been assessed and people have pleaded guilty.

All of that is the fact, and it is pointing closer and closer to the White House; and, therefore, I understand, gentlemen, I understand why you are so upset. I suppose if I were somehow to stand here and be an advocate for the President, I might be upset, too, because the net is drawing tighter, because information is coming clearer.

So come to the floor, do what you can, do what you can to undermine the investigation; do what you can, through your falsehoods, through your incorrect interpretations of plain facts, to undermine the integrity of an investigation. I understand why you would be intent upon doing so.

But the purpose of this evening isn't that. It is something that will affect America for the next two decades, at least. The purpose of this hour is to talk to the American people about what is happening here while these foolish floor discussions are going on.

What is happening here in Congress at this moment, this week, is one of the biggest transfers of wealth ever in America's history; the transfer of wealth from the working men and women of America, from the poor, from the elderly, to the superwealthy of America.

What is happening here in Congress now, in a conference committee, is the drafting of legislation, tax legislation, that will dramatically affect the American economy for decades.

□ 1815

Transferring wealth, benefits that the elderly receive in Medicare, transferring benefits that the poor receive in food stamps, in Meals on Wheels, in Medicare, Medicaid, children's health programs; transferring those necessary benefits that these men and women need to survive, to be able to live; transferring those benefits to the superwealthy in a tax proposal that gives to the largest American corporations and to the top 1 percent, over \$5 trillion over the next decade, that is what is happening.

Here is a fact: American corporations that have already seen their share of burden to finance this government, to educate the Americans, to keep our military, to deal with national security, they have seen their share of the Federal revenues drop from some 20 percent—actually, 30 percent in 1939, 15 percent in 1960, down to somewhere in the 5 to 10 percent range. At the same time, the burden is shifted to the middle class. That is what is happening.

Here is what should be happening. Here is the way we ought to look at it. On The Mall here in Washington, we have the FDR Memorial. Etched in the marble is this: "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have little."

I presented this upside down almost on purpose because that is precisely

what our Republican colleagues are doing. They are taking that value and turning it upside down. Instead of doing more for those who have little, they are doing much for those who already control the greatest amount of wealth ever in the handful of a few people since the 1400s, when the Spanish Empire was ripping off the Western Hemisphere. That is what is happening.

Of all of this money, the top 1 percent and America's biggest corporations are gaining, and the rest of Americans, over the next 5 to 7 years, are going to pay for that. We have to stop this tax cut. We have to stop it because it is terrible public policy.

American corporations don't need more money. It was reported today that Apple—the world's largest, most valuable corporation, Apple, in my State of California—is sitting on \$2.5 trillion of cash today in the United States, and another \$2.5 trillion of cash outside the United States, and they want their tax rate reduced. They are almost paying nothing now because they are able to escape American taxes.

They say: Lower the corporate tax rate so that there will be investment in America.

It ain't so. In the last 20 years, there has been a cataclysmic change in the way in which corporations use their profits.

In the 1970s, 50, 60 percent of the after-tax profits of corporations went into building their business, building new equipment, new manufacturing plants, adding employees, increasing wages. The remaining 40 percent or so went to dividends.

Where are we today?

Less than 10 percent goes to increasing a company's manufacturing, the company's employment, wages for workers.

Where does the rest of it go?

It goes to stock buybacks and to dividends. It goes to the shareholders.

And who are the shareholders?

The top 1 percent.

This is the scam of all times. They say we have got to reduce the taxes on corporations so that they will employ more Americans. If only they would. If only they would.

I am sure you have heard of AT&T. Do you know what the effective tax rate of AT&T is?

Not 35 percent, not 30 percent, not even 20 percent, as this tax bill would set as the maximum rate of corporations. The effective tax rate for the last 10 years for AT&T has been 8 percent. Eight percent.

And during that time, did they use that after-tax profit to add employees, to increase wages?

No. They laid off 80,000 American workers.

What did they use that money for?

Stock buybacks, corporate executives, \$124 million to the CEO just 2 years ago.

I could go on and on, but I would like to bring to this debate Mr. CICILLINE,

who has determined that there is a better deal, better wages, better future, better jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE).

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend from California for not only organizing this evening's Special Order hour, but for his long-term advocacy for working people in this country and for his extraordinary advocacy for the people of the State of California.

As my colleague described what the Republicans are attempting to do in this tax proposal, it is very clear to me that this isn't tax reform. It is not a tax bill. It is a tax scam. It is a scam in that the American people are being sold a bill of goods.

All across this country tonight, there are millions of Americans who will go to sleep tonight worrying about whether or not they are going to be able to make it through the next week, whether they have enough to pay their bills, to take care of their family, to set aside a little for their retirement. The reason that they are worried about this is they are not making enough money.

So what the Republicans propose to do in this tax bill will make that problem worse. We have spoken over the last several months about an agenda that is really at the heart of this problem, that raises incomes for families, that reduces the costs in people's lives, and that ensures that they have the tools to be successful in the 21st century.

It is an agenda that really focuses on addressing the fundamental and economic anxiety facing millions of American families all across our country. We know it is because people are struggling. They are just not making enough money.

The same can't be said of the biggest corporations in this country, where we are seeing record profits, Wall Street through the roof. So people understand something is not working right in our economy. They are struggling. They haven't seen their wages go up for a very long time. America hasn't had a raise in a long time, yet corporate profits are through the roof and the stock market is through the roof, and people are saying: This isn't working.

So what we should be doing is investing in the creation of good-paying jobs that will result in better jobs, better wages, and a better future. But what this Republican proposal does is it relies on this old Republican theory of trickle-down economics: if we just let people at the very top have more money, it is going to trickle down to the rest of us and we will all benefit.

We know this doesn't work. We have seen time and time again this doesn't work. And part of the reason it doesn't work is because people at the top can only buy so much stuff. The way you really grow the economy is you grow the middle class. Make sure people have a job, have money in their pockets to buy the goods and services that business produces.

If you go to any small business in my State of Rhode Island and you ask small-business owners, "What do you need to add an employee, to add jobs to your company," they will give you the same answer, "I need customers. I need people to buy what I make and I sell."

That is why growing the middle class and focusing on raising incomes of working people is actually how you create jobs. Those are the job creators: working people, the middle class of this country who are creating the demand that leads to job growth.

But what this tax scam does is it gives 67 percent of the tax cuts to the top 1 percent, huge benefits for the biggest corporations in this country, further incentivizes companies to ship American jobs overseas, and to realize profits from doing that. It cuts important deductions, in the House bill at least, for student loan interest, medical expenses, State and local taxes. It is going to raise taxes on 87 million Americans, middle class folks, working people.

In order to finance this tax cut for the richest people in this country and the biggest corporations that don't need it, the middle class and working people are going to pay for it and the next generation is going to be burdened with \$1.5 trillion in debt over the next 10 years.

We are borrowing money to give tax cuts to big corporations, the wealthiest people in this country, and we are going to shoulder the next generation with that burden?

Shame on them.

So this conference committee is meeting and going to come up with some proposal that apparently is going to be pleasing to their donors.

We know in the Senate some of the donors had the provisions of the bill before Members of the Senate had them. They came out with handwritten notes in the margins because they were so desperate to get this done for the moneyed class. In fact, some of our colleagues admitted it and said something like: Look, if we don't pass this, our donors said, Don't bother calling us.

What we need is tax reform that provides a tax cut to working people and the middle class. We could have done that in a bipartisan way. The last time there was tax reform, there were hundreds of witnesses, months of testimony. This stuff is complicated.

What happened in the House?

Not one hearing, not one witness. Jammed through, as Congressman RASKIN said, in the dark of night, at the speed of light. Because the more the American people hear about this tax scam, they know it is not for them. They know they are not going to benefit. They know the same old corporate special interests that have so much influence in this town helped write this bill, and that they are going to benefit from it and they are determined to jam this through, regardless of the public sentiment.

The American people are against this bill 2-1. That number is going to grow

the more people learn about it. That doesn't seem to matter.

So I thank the gentleman for inviting me tonight and allowing me to speak. He has been here longer than I have. I can say with all honesty that the day that bill passed the House was one of the worst days I have ever been in this Chamber because I know how this tax scam, this effort by the Republicans in the House is really going to hurt the American people. I have never seen a situation in which public sentiment was so strongly opposed to this measure. Despite that, our colleagues are moving forward with it.

I don't know that my colleague has seen an occasion like this before, but I would like to hear Mr. GARAMENDI's thoughts on that.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I actually have seen something like this before. Last summer, the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, or at least the attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act, where 24 million Americans were going to lose their health insurance, this House rammed it right through, just totally ignoring the welfare. And I am not talking about corporate welfare. I am talking about the well-being of 24 million Americans who stood to lose their insurance.

Now that is being repeated. In fact, in this legislation, there is a provision that it would only cause 13 million Americans to lose their insurance.

So not only are they doing this tax scam, as the gentleman so well described it, but they put in a provision that would cause 13 million Americans to lose their insurance over the next several years, and 4 million Americans next year.

□ 1830

A person might say: What morality do you have? What are your values when you do that kind of thing?

So, yes, I have seen it, and we are seeing it once again.

So what is the value? It is not this. It is not the test of our progress of what we do for those who have little. It is the upside down of that. It is: How can we do more for those who have much, the top 1 percent?

Mr. CICILLINE is from Rhode Island. I am from California. I think the view from ocean to ocean and somewhere in between, there has got to be some sanity here, if you will.

Mr. CICILLINE. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GARAMENDI. I yield to the gentleman from Rhode Island.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I think the other thing that is very important to acknowledge here, and I think we have heard the Speaker say this—we have heard Senator RUBIO make reference to this—is that the American people, I hope, understand that this is part one of a multipart story. Our Republican colleagues have made it very clear that this tax scam, this sort of giveaway to corporate

America and the richest people in this country, is just part one.

Next year, after you give away \$1.5 trillion, unpaid for, you come back next year and you say: We have no money. We are going to have to cut Social Security, cut Medicare, cut Medicaid, cut Pell grants, cut investments in healthcare, and cut investments in rebuilding the infrastructure of our country.

So our Republican colleagues are setting this up as an effort to gut Medicare and Medicaid. Let's be clear about that. You can't give away \$1.5 trillion that you don't have.

And next year they are going to be heard to say: Geez, we have no money. We have to cut all of these programs that middle class Americans and working families rely on to survive and to prosper and to get a shot. And their answer is going to be: There is no money.

And why isn't there any money? Because we gave it away to millionaires and billionaires and corporations and people who didn't need it. As a result of it, you are going to pay for it by cutting Medicare and cutting Social Security and cutting Pell grants.

The immorality of this is stunning.

So I think we have to not only defeat this tax scam, but call it out for what it is. This is an effort by our Republican colleagues to finally get what they want. I think our Speaker has said: I dreamed about it, or, I drank beer thinking about cuts to Medicare and Medicaid.

They call them entitlements. They are not entitlements. These are earned benefits that people get after a lifetime of hard work, of playing by the rules, of doing what is right.

This is phase one of a multiphase plan which will hurt working people in this country, and we have to call them out on it.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I thank the gentleman. He is absolutely correct.

It used to be, I think just 2 or 3 months ago, that, on this floor, you would hear the sound of the deficit hawks. You would hear them screaming, crying out about the huge deficit. And, indeed, we do have a huge deficit. If you take a look at the growth of the deficit, this is 2027. At the end of this tax bill, it is growing at \$500 billion a year without the additional deficit created by the tax bill. They would cry. They would lament the situation.

Suddenly—maybe it is because it is winter, and, like the Canadian geese, they flew south—they have disappeared. They are nowhere to be found around Washington, D.C. But I suspect, with the new year, as the days grow longer, as it warms up, the deficit hawks will return, and they will come back with a vengeance, just as the gentleman said.

Wait a minute. The gentleman didn't say it. He repeated what the Speaker of the House of Representatives said, what our Republican colleagues voted for in their budget proposal just ahead of this tax proposal. They said it very,

very clearly. They intend to take \$500 billion out of Medicare, right out of the healthcare for seniors.

They intend—they did it in their budget. They did it in their words. The Speaker did it in his own words. They intend to cut Medicare \$500 billion and Medicaid by \$1.5 trillion so that the deficit that they created with the tax scam that gives all of that money to the wealthy and to the corporations, they are going to take it right out of the pockets of the elderly. They are going to take it right out of the pockets of the poor.

Keep in mind that some 50 to 60 percent of Medicaid money goes to seniors in nursing homes and in extended care facilities.

Something is dramatically wrong. Where is the morality of this? Where is the human value? Where are the words? Where are the words of FDR? Blowing in the wind, long gone.

Mr. CICILLINE, I have noticed we have been joined by one of our colleagues. I don't know if she wants to join me.

Mr. CICILLINE. A very distinguished colleague.

Mr. GARAMENDI. We will just continue.

Mr. CICILLINE. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GARAMENDI. I yield to the gentleman from Rhode Island.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, it is important to note here—I think my memory is correct on this—that the \$1.5 trillion in debt which will be generated by this tax giveaway is exactly the same number that they cut from Medicare and Medicaid in the budget they just voted on. So we don't have to wonder whether that is the plan. They have already done it in the budget that they have proposed. And as you said, the Speaker, Senator RUBIO, and others have already acknowledged this.

So this should be clear. We are going to vote, and have already voted, to give a tax cut

Mr. GARAMENDI. The word “we” is incorrect.

Mr. CICILLINE. The gentleman is correct. They have already voted to cut \$1.5 trillion to give a tax cut to the wealthiest people in this country, to the biggest corporations; and in order to pay for that, they intend to gut Medicare and Medicaid and a whole range of other very important investments we make, that our country makes, in supporting and strengthening the middle class.

It shouldn't be a surprise to anyone when, next year, as the gentleman said, the deficit hawks return in the warm weather to say: Oh, my goodness, there is no money. We are going to have to end the guarantee of Medicare. We are going to have to cut Social Security. We are going to have to eliminate or cut Pell grants. We are going to reduce all of these investments which matter so much to working families in this country.

They are intent on doing that. They have tried to do it for the last several

years, but not to the magnitude of success that they expect when they drain the coffers by giving away the money, which is exactly their strategy. And it is why we have to fight hard against this tax scam because it is not just a tax giveaway to people who don't need it. It is what it will do to the economy.

I think there was a New York Times analysis of 38 economists. Not one, not any economist I have ever heard of yet, has said that this tax cut will pay for itself.

We keep hearing our Republican colleagues: Oh, this is going to pay for itself. The economy is going to grow, and jobs are going to. It is a pipe dream. There is not a single economist, Republican, Democrat, Independent, who says these tax cuts will pay for themselves because, of course, they won't.

Who will pay for them? The middle class of this country.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, we have heard that argument over and over. If I am not mistaken, the economy is working pretty close to maximum right now, 3 percent. The unemployment rate is 4 percent or in that range, maybe a little lower, and the Federal Reserve is looking at increasing the interest rate to slow down the economy. Our Republican friends say they need to beef up the economy.

So tell me how it works. When the Federal Government borrows more money for this deficit, that will cause interest rates to go up because they are competing with other folks who want to borrow money. The Federal Reserve is increasing interest rates. So we can look for interest rates going up. The economy is slowing down.

So how does this increase? It just doesn't work in macroeconomic terms in any way.

But I don't want to be an economist. What I want to be is just factual. So if I might, for a moment, these are 10 popular deductions that the Republicans are limiting or repealing in their tax bill, the list of horrors: limits the State and local tax deduction, which is a big problem for California, a big problem for New York, a big problem for, really, every State because every State has taxpayers who deduct State and local taxes.

For California, in my district, 32 percent of the taxpayers use this deduction, and it is over \$10,000. We are a high-cost State, housing and so forth.

Mr. CICILLINE. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GARAMENDI. I yield to the gentleman from Rhode Island.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, one thing to remember there is that States that are investing in their infrastructure, investing in public safety, that are asking for local taxpayers to do their part, you punish them, and you incentivize States that are not making that investment. It is bad public policy.

Mr. GARAMENDI. The gentleman mentioned this one, but I think we need to focus on it.

Right now, if you are going to go to college, almost every person is going to have to borrow money. Student debt is over \$1.2 trillion. Young men and women who graduate are burdened by that student debt. They are not buying cars. They are not building any business. They are trying to pay off the debt. They are able to deduct the interest on that debt. It helps them out a little bit.

So what do our Republican friends do? They eliminate the interest deduction on student debt. The gentleman has spoken to this.

Mr. CICILLINE. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GARAMENDI. I yield to the gentleman from Rhode Island.

Mr. CICILLINE. I started to interrupt. I was just going to say that, for young people, what this tax scam does is particularly damaging because it not only saddles the next generation with \$1.5 trillion of debt, but in addition to that, it makes their cost of pursuing higher education more expensive.

Who in their right mind thinks it is a good idea to make it harder or more expensive for young people to go to college? We ought to be making it easier and more affordable, less difficult. Young people are already graduating with enormous debt, going to a tough job market in terms of what they can earn, and the Republicans are taking away the deduction so they can finance a tax debt for the richest people in this country.

Mr. GARAMENDI. That is precisely what they are doing.

The gentleman talked earlier about a better plan. He talked about better education, about better opportunities. We know. And the gentleman and I have been on this floor talking about how to build the American economy. In that discussion, we know that the economy grows on research. It grows on research at universities all across this Nation.

What do our Republican friends do in their tax bill? They are going to make it extremely difficult to do research at the universities by placing a very onerous tax on graduate students who are working in those research institutions.

Right now, graduate students get paid a stipend, a small amount of money to do the research in those research institutions, and they get their tuition free. Our Republican colleagues, for reasons that make no sense whatsoever, would tax that tuition that is not paid. So these young men and women in these graduate studies are going to have to pay a tax, and they never receive any cash to pay the tax.

What would be the result? Universities across the entire Nation are saying: Stop it. Don't do this. We will not be able to hire graduate students to do research because they cannot afford it.

How stupid. If we are going to have a better economy, if we are going to have better jobs, better wages, education is the essential foundation for that. And

yet what do they do here with this? They go right after the students.

When it comes time for cuts—the gentleman said it before—Pell grants, other kinds of stipends, other kinds of assistance for education, gone. One of the fundamentals of the Democratic program is a better education, a better educated workforce so that there will be better jobs, better wages, better economy.

Mr. CICILLINE. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GARAMENDI. I yield to the gentleman from Rhode Island.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, an important part of that is doubling the investment in apprenticeship programs, career and technical education, making sure we are creating pathways to produce better wages, better jobs for a better future. And the last thing families need, because the focus has to be on raising family incomes, is a tax scam that is going to raise their taxes.

That is exactly the reverse of what most middle class and working families need. They need more money in their pockets, not less.

And when I hear my Republican colleagues say: This is a tax cut for middle class, that is not true. For 87 million Americans, their taxes will go up. For many Americans, the deductions that they take will be eliminated, and 67 percent of the tax cuts go to the top 1 percent.

So it is important, again, that they are trying to jam this through quickly because I think they understand that, if they don't, the more the American people learn about it, the less they like it, and the more they are going to attempt to stop it.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I have gone through three of the horrors here, the student loans and the graduate deductions.

We have seen disasters across America: floods, hurricanes, California fires, thousands of homes lost in California. So what does this brilliant tax thing do? It eliminates the casualty loss deduction.

□ 1845

It eliminates the casualty loss deduction. So if your home burns down in a fire—maybe it is one of the catastrophic fires that are now burning in California—your home is gone. Comes time the next year to pay your taxes, you can deduct the loss that you had incurred. Not anymore. Not what our brilliant tax writers on the Republican side would do. The casualty loss disappears.

If that is not enough, you have lost your home, you have lost your job, and you need to move. You need to move your family. They eliminate the moving expense deduction.

How is a family going to get a better job?

You used to be able—you would today—to eliminate—you would be able to write off the moving expense. But not with the tax bill.

Mr. CICILLINE. Except if you are a corporation. They keep that deduction. So think about that. If you have to move to follow your job, you can't deduct that from your taxes; but if your company moves your job overseas, the corporations can deduct the cost of moving your job.

Mr. GARAMENDI. But the individual can't deduct the moving expense to follow the job.

Mr. CICILLINE. Correct. Correct.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, something is terribly wrong here. Four in my family are teachers. It is a little thing, but it means everything. It is little. Teachers are able to deduct from their taxes \$250 for expenses that they have paid for classroom supplies. Gone. It is gone. If you want to hurt the system, stick it to the teachers.

Why would you do that?

It is not a big thing. It is a little thing, but it means everything to that classroom. It is the additional paper, the crayons, the chalkboard, whatever.

How small is that? Is that a better deal for America?

I don't think so.

The casualty loss deduction hurts. Three hundred homes in my district were lost in the October fires. The casualty loss deduction is gone. I don't know, maybe they will be able to rebuild. But when it comes time to address that deficit, I can assure you that they will do everything they can to cut the programs that would support that family as they attempt to rebuild.

So you get the program, you lose on the front end, your tax deduction is gone, and you lose on the back end when you go to get mortgage assistance.

There has got to be a better plan. There has got to be a better way to do it.

Mr. Speaker, over the years, in the last several months, Mr. CICILLINE and his colleagues on the Democratic Caucus have put together a program for a better life for Americans. It involves much of what we talked about here. It involves a tax program that is balanced, one that provides the incentives for businesses to stay in the United States. We haven't talked about the corporate tax program that allows for territorial taxing, a specific effort in this legislation to encourage corporations to go offshore where their corporate income will never be taxed.

That is not a better plan. That is not a better program for building American jobs and wages. It is a way for corporations to continue to escape. Someday soon I would hope Mr. CICILLINE and his colleagues would bring to this floor—the three of them who have put together this program on how we can build the American economy—well, the gentleman can talk in specific ways about how we can have educational programs, apprenticeship training programs, and job training programs, how we can encourage corporations to invest in America, and how we can Make It In America.

I would love to join Mr. CICILLINE and talk about a bill that we are soon going to introduce that would require that, when we export a strategic national asset—our oil and natural gas—that it would be on American-built ships with American sailors. We could employ hundreds of thousands of people in our shipyards by changing the laws and by providing incentives for Americans to stay here and to work here.

Mr. Speaker, I know this is Mr. CICILLINE's effort. I know the gentleman wants to get to it. Perhaps we can wrap up.

Mr. CICILLINE. Absolutely. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman again for including me. I look forward to the opportunity to come back and talk in more detail about the economic agenda that we collectively have put forward as the House Democrats working with the Senate Democrats that is focused on better jobs and better wages for a better future, the creation of 10 million full-time, good-paying jobs, expanded investments in apprenticeships and work-based learning, ensuring that we are providing investments in career and technical education, affordable childcare, reducing the cost of prescription drugs, rebuilding the infrastructure of our country. The list goes on and on, all focused on creating good-paying, full-time jobs, raising family incomes, reducing the costs that families bear on everything from cable bills to prescription drugs and healthcare, and making sure people have the skills necessary for the jobs of the 21st century so they can be successful.

It is exactly the opposite of what is going to be achieved in this Republican tax scam.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to coming back with my distinguished colleagues, CHERI BUSTOS from Illinois, HAKEEM JEFFRIES from New York, and Mr. GARAMENDI so that we can talk in a lot of detail about our economic agenda that will focus on supporting and strengthening working people in this country and giving a better deal to the American people than the raw deal they are getting from our colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. CICILLINE so very much for joining me tonight.

I really want to go back and plow this field one more time. I am just a farm boy from California. I don't know that we have said it enough nor have we said it all. We do know that in this tax scam there is a \$1.4 trillion reduction in corporate taxes with no assurance that that is going to create jobs in America. But quite the opposite. It will be a great boon for the super-wealthy, who will see their stock values go up as that additional after-tax income for the corporations is spent on stock buybacks, dividends, and executive pay.

We know that the alternative minimum tax will disappear, and that is about \$900 billion to the, again, top income earners.

We know in California and across the Nation that the State and local tax deduction will be gone. That will probably cost those 32 percent of the taxpayers—the tax filers in my district that use that deduction—\$1,000 to \$2,000 in additional taxes.

We know this is going to go on and on, and we know that the deficit is going to be increased. There may be some growth. There has been one analysis that said there may be a couple hundred billion dollars of growth, but it is not going to make up for the \$1.5 trillion deficit on top of the existing deficit.

We know the deficit hawks will be back. They have said it very clearly. They are going to come back and they are going to cut Medicare and Medicaid. We know they are going to take it out of the healthcare for the poor. They know they want to end insurance in the Affordable Care Act for 13 million Americans. All of that has been laid out. We know all of those things.

Oh, just in case you are one of those people who have high medical costs, like a senior 50 years of age, who has a serious medical condition and you have been able to deduct from your taxes the medical costs, forget it. Our Republican friends are eliminating the medical cost deduction.

Why would they do that? Why would they take after people who have serious medical problems?

Their out-of-pocket costs are covering all of that.

This is a long story, but for my colleagues here on the floor, Democratic and Republican, be very, very careful because this particular tax bill, should it ever become law, is going to take this Nation a decade, maybe two decades, to get out of from underneath the extraordinary burden that it is going to place on the American economy, on the working men and women, and on the poor in America.

The things we need to do, Mr. CICILLINE talked about infrastructure. The President says: I am going to have a \$1 trillion infrastructure program.

Really? Really? He is going to do that?

He just ripped the guts out of the American Treasury.

Where is the money?

Oh, it is going to be private money. No. He has already given up on that. His words, not mine.

So where is the public investment?

Five trillion dollars disappears. Five trillion dollars. Some of it made up by the elimination of these deductions that I have talked about.

Still, there is at least a \$1.5 trillion hole. The only way that they can possibly make up that after giving away all of that money to the corporations, all of that money to the super-wealthy—and did I mention the estate tax?

I probably should have. The House bill eliminated the estate tax.

What does that mean to our esteemed President?

Well, he says that he is worth \$10 billion.

Who am I to argue with him?

If he is, and he were to die, it means \$4 billion less tax to his children. Four billion. Now, others say he is only worth \$4 billion. So let's take \$4 billion. For his children, it is simply a tax reduction of \$1 billion.

What does that amount to?

That is what this is about. This is all about the wealthy. This is all about those who have much. It is most definitely not about what FDR said. Etched in stone on the FDR Memorial: "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much. It is whether we provide enough for those who have little."

So where is our heart? So what is our moral value? Is it morality? Is it right to add more to those who have much? Or is the purpose, the central value of this Nation the opposite, to add more to those who have too little?

That is where I am. That is where my Democratic colleagues are. I am afraid my Republican colleagues are proving the opposite.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BACON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY) for 30 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yet again rise along with my colleagues because Americans are dying and this House is doing nothing. They are dying every day in their homes, in our schoolyards, and, yes, even at events hosted by Members of this House. Still we do nothing.

Mr. Speaker, every day, 93 Americans lose their lives to gun violence, and still this House has not acted.

If anything, last week, the majority passed through a dangerous bill that will put more lives, especially the lives of law enforcement officers, at risk.

Mr. Speaker, these are fathers and mothers, daughters and sons, beloved friends and dear colleagues. These are people in every one of our communities and in every one of our districts. Not one Member of this House can come to the floor and say that their community—their neighbors and their district—hasn't been affected by gun violence. Not one Member, yet we still do nothing as bullets fly and mothers cry. We do nothing as we lose children and

police officers. The death, destruction, and carnage continue, and still we do nothing.

In less than a decade, two Members of this House have been shot and a staffer murdered, and even that can't move us to act and save American lives.

Mr. Speaker, at what cost does our continued silence come?

Earlier this year, I pledged to read the names of 5,950 gun violence victims into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—a number that should have special significance to the Speaker.

Today we continue honoring those taken from us by gun violence, and we pledge to honor their legacy through action that saves lives.

So I asked my social media followers to share their personal stories of how gun violence has torn their families and communities apart. These are their names and stories:

Lenore Draper, a community activist working to stop the violence.

Kenneth D. Mitchell, Jr., served three tours of duty in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Kuwait. He lost his life to gun violence here in America, leaving behind three sons, one of whom will never meet his father.

Thomas R. Lee was killed in Harvey, Illinois, on August 13, 2008.

Patricia May Springer.

Malcolm Dowdy was killed leaving a Memorial Day party. He had just purchased a home, was getting married, was on the dean's list, and was the proud father of a 17-month-old. His mom, Michelle, asked me to read his name.

Katie Kearns, just 24 years old, was murdered in rural Kankakee County.

John Thomas Larimer, just age 27, gave his life protecting two friends at the Aurora, Colorado, theater shooting.

Jessica Ghawi was also killed at the tragedy in Aurora, Colorado. Her mother, Sandy, asked me to read her name today.

□ 1900

Jonathan Schaffer.

Camilo Senchyna-Beltran, killed while celebrating the completion of paramedic school. Tomorrow should have been his 30th birthday.

Sterling "Steelo" G. McKenzie.

Rami Cooks.

Lashea Cretain was shot five times by a boyfriend in 1996, and survived. She reached out on Twitter, asking me to tell her story. She still lives with those bullets.

Steven Laurence, 21, a friend of my staffer, Mia.

Kenneth Bowens.

Diane Mokos Kriz, the mother of four girls, was murdered while stopping at her church on the way to the hospital where she worked. Her sister, Charlene, asked me to read her name.

Lindsay Key.

Calvin Thompson, Jr.

Kenzo Dix, just 15 years old, killed in an accident with a loaded, but unlocked, gun.

Bill Venable, 17, and his father, Billy Venable.

Tim Boyd of Chicago Heights.

Kerry Parks was killed in a drive-by shooting. Her friend Lucy asked me to read her name. She said that Kerry "was my best friend and was just playing out in her front yard like we always did. She was full of life, love, and smiles."

Maurice Hobbs.

Betsy Lowther, who left behind a husband, a daughter, and grandson. Her niece Amy asked me to read her name. She said her aunt "was a generous, loving, vibrant woman who struggled with depression."

James Williams, 21 years old.

Larry Perrine, 17 years old.

Galen Gibson, 18 years old.

Professor N. Saez.

Ricky Riggins.

Joyce Penebaker. I was asked to read her name by her son Khary. He said: "I chose to tell my daughter about my mom, her grandmother, and how she died by suicide with a gun when I was very young. I wanted my daughter to know what has motivated me to get active in the gun violence prevention movement."

Christy Owens.

Patrick Wyatt McKinley. His mother, Jeanette, asked me to read his name. He was killed in front of his home on New Year's Eve 2004, a day that should be a celebration of new beginnings.

Steven Shears.

Kimberlee Thomas and her father, Keith Thomas.

Kay Weins was taken while showing compassion to a stranger. She left behind two sons and several beautiful grandchildren. Her cousin Edward asked me to read her name.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (Ms. CLARK). Since her election, Congresswoman CLARK has been a dedicated leader in efforts to protect the health and safety of American families. Congresswoman CLARK cares deeply about this issue and was the architect of the gun violence prevention sit-in.

Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts. First, I thank my colleague from Illinois, Congresswoman KELLY, for her leadership in this fight to reduce gun violence and for bringing us together this evening, as she has so many times, speaking so eloquently about gun violence, the effect in her district, and around our country.

Tonight, I would like to focus on a particular type of gun violence. It is one that happens every 16 hours in America, when a woman is fatally shot by a former or current intimate partner.

Here are some more horrific facts:

In 8 out of 10 gun deaths involving intimate partners, the victims are women.

The majority of mass shooters killed their intimate partner during their rampage, and the perpetrators of do-

mestic violence are the shooters in more than half of all mass shootings.

Abused women are five times more likely to be killed by their abuser if their abuser has access to a firearm.

All of this adds up to a grisly reality: American women are 16 times more likely to be killed by gunshot than women in any other developed country. You don't have to look very hard to see there is something very wrong with this picture.

The most powerful Nation in the world, with our proud tradition of innovation and ingenuity, appears to be completely impotent in reducing gun violence. At least that is what our Republican leaders would like us to believe.

We do not debate or have votes on legislation that can help a domestic violence victim who wants to protect her family or wants to prevent her abusive partner from getting their hands on a gun. But if you are the gun lobby, you get a vote to allow those with a history of domestic violence to access guns.

I am here to remind my colleagues that these actions come with a devastating price. The names I am going to read tonight are names of Massachusetts women whose domestic abusers have shot them to death.

These are women who have died just in the last 5 years in Massachusetts. They are the ones who never get a vote in this Chamber. They are the ones the majority has not even tried to help:

Eugenia Gomes Monteiro.

Aracelys Valdez DeLeon.

Nicole White.

Amanda Glover.

Jeannine O'Connor.

Kelly Sugarman.

Yahaira Hernandez.

Lisa Trubnikova.

Michelle Batista.

Matilde Gabin.

Mabilia Maranhao.

Elizabeth A. Coyne.

Ramonita Colon.

Audilia DaVeiga.

Julie Treadwell.

Glomerays Martinez.

Donna Zollo.

Tyshiana Atkins.

Belinda Torres.

Keosha N. Gilmore.

Lori Levangie.

These women and other victims of gun violence deserve better, and we are doing nothing to prevent future deaths. These are just a portion of those who die every single day in this country. We can do better and we must do better.

Again, I thank my colleague for all her work to make sure that we fulfill a promise to keep our families at home secure.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I am sorry the Congresswoman had to read all of those names. Maybe, as we go on, things will change. We will learn and things will change.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from the great State of California (Ms. LEE), a member of the Appropriations Committee.

Since her election to Congress, Congresswoman LEE has been a fearless and dedicated leader on ending poverty and health disparities in our Nation's communities, including gun violence.

Like many who serve in this House, she is someone who has attended too many funerals and comforted too many grieving mothers, fathers, and colleagues because of gun violence.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman KELLY for her tremendous leadership on so many fronts, especially as chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust and for her tireless work in helping us focus on the fact that gun violence should be treated as a public health crisis and that it is just that.

Congress needs to do something to stop this epidemic of gun violence that is destroying so many communities all around the country. On an average day, 93 innocent lives in America are cut short, due to gun violence. These senseless deaths also disproportionately impact communities of color.

As a Representative from California's 13th Congressional District, I know all too well the devastating impact that gun violence has on our communities.

In fact, the Center for Disease Control recently reported that African-American children have the highest rates of firearm mortality overall. They are about 10 times more likely than White children to be killed by guns. Latino children are twice as likely as White children to be killed by guns. But no child—and I mean no child—regardless of their background, wealth, ZIP Code, or race, should be killed by gun violence. No child. It pains me, and I know it pains their parents and family members, to know that such promising young people have left us too soon.

Tonight, let me just read the names of a few of Oakland's children who have lost their lives to gun violence this year:

Anibal Andres Ramirez, who was only 13. He was Oakland's youngest gun victim this year. He was shot outside the new Walnut Plaza community center in east Oakland.

Luis Urquidez, who was 17 when his friend accidentally shot him. What in the world was that gun doing around this young boy?

Deangelo Hal, who was 17 when he, once again, accidentally shot himself with a stolen gun.

Keith Lawrence, who was 17 and a student at Skyline High School. Keith was found shot dead in a parking lot.

Soane Mausia, who was 18 when he and his brother were shot by men outside of their east Oakland home.

Joaquin Byrd, who was 18 and also a student at Skyline High School. He was shot during a fight at a fast food restaurant.

Sultan Bey, who was 18. He was college-bound and had dreams of becoming a computer engineer. He was shot while picking up a friend.

Mr. Speaker, this only happens in America. There are too many guns in

America. At some point, we have to stand up and say: Enough is enough.

Let me say that 5 years ago this week, a deranged gunman walked into Sandy Hook Elementary School and massacred 20 children—20 beautiful elementary school children, whom we continue to remember, murdered in cold blood. Yet Republicans in Congress refuse to lift a finger in support of legislation to prevent these kinds of tragedies from happening.

Shame on every Republican who chooses devotion to the NRA over the lives of Americans. We simply must take action to bring commonsense gun reform to our Nation's gun laws. That is what the American people sent us here to do, to govern in their best interest.

That is why we stand here tonight with Congresswoman KELLY and demand that the Speaker take action and bring commonsense legislation for a vote.

Give us a vote, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, Congresswoman LEE's words remind me of what I hear sometimes: we need to wait before we do anything; this group or that group or someone just died, and we are already talking about what we are going to do. It has been 5 years since Newtown, and we still have done nothing.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. DEMINGS). She sees this issue through a number of lenses: a mom, a wife of law enforcement, and a career law enforcement officer herself.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I echo the comments I have heard from other colleagues to thank my colleague from Illinois, Representative KELLY, for her unwavering commitment to this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak for those who have died in the United States as a result of senseless gun violence. I want to reflect this evening on where we have been, where we are now, and where we must go from here.

When I took office 1 year ago, I was so excited to give my first speech on the House floor. But I never dreamed my first speech would be a tribute to a former friend and colleague.

My first floor speech was to honor Sergeant Debra Clayton, a law enforcement officer who was shot and killed while trying to apprehend a murder suspect, a person who should have never had a gun in his possession in the first place.

Since then, two more law enforcement officers from central Florida, Officer Matthew Scott Baxter and Sergeant Richard Samuel Howard, have been shot and killed, both officers of the Kissimmee Police Department.

I was sworn into Congress just 6 months after the mass shooting in Orlando at the Pulse nightclub where 49 people who were involved in what my bishop likes to call a late-night fellowship—not doing anything wrong, not in the wrong place—were killed by a lone gunman.

At that time, it was the worst mass shooting in modern American history. But in the short time since then, the number 49 has been surpassed as 59 people were killed in Las Vegas just a few months ago.

□ 1915

What this says is things are not getting better, and Congress has failed to take responsible action. Since the Newtown shooting, Congress has held at least 50 moments of silence for the victims of gun violence. But, Mr. Speaker, please tell me: How does a moment of silence protect the next victim?

I join my colleagues in honoring the victims who have died tragically of gun violence in our Nation. The victims deserve to be remembered. Their families deserve recognition, and the victims and their families deserve action.

John 13:17 says: "Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." Well, we now know these things. In other words, when you know better, Mr. Speaker, you are supposed to do better.

We also know that the vast majority of the American people across the Nation want action.

As a former law enforcement officer, I had a duty to enforce the laws to protect the innocent; and, Mr. Speaker, as Members of Congress, we have a duty to enact laws that protect the innocent. We need to stand up to the gun lobby and take on their indiscriminate sales of bump stocks and other modifications that make weapons deadlier or more suited for criminal violence. We need to strengthen programs that work, such as the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, and drastically improve mental health screening and treatment.

And I continue to oppose concealed carry reciprocity, as I did last week on the floor, because it would allow persons from outside your State to bring their firearms anywhere in your State, making the job of law enforcement officers on the street who have the responsibility of sorting it all out more difficult and, potentially, more dangerous.

Mr. Speaker, the men, women, mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, brothers, and sisters gunned down in our country deserve remembrance. They also deserve courage from their leaders. They deserve action from their leaders. I once again call on this body to provide some.

Debra Clayton, Matthew Baxter, and Sam Howard.

Again, I thank my colleague from Illinois for her unwavering commitment and leadership on this issue.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman DEMINGS for those remarks, and I thank her for reminding us of the law enforcement officers who have lost their lives protecting us.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY), from the town of Newtown. Congresswoman ESTY is a tireless advocate for

commonsense legislation that will save American lives. She knows all too well the cost that gun violence takes on our communities and on our families. Like many who serve in this House, she is someone who has attended funerals, comforted, and continues to comfort so many grieving mothers and fathers because of gun violence.

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ms. KELLY for yielding. Ms. KELLY has been such a stalwart voice for all who are all too often forgotten in what we are seeing happen in this country, a voice for those who are not lost, because sometimes we say “lost to gun violence.” These are not lives that are lost. These are lives that are ripped from us, taken from us, brutally ended.

In the 5 years since the horrific shootings in Newtown, Connecticut, in my district, 170,000 Americans have been taken from us, sons and daughters of this great country, 170,000 souls.

We should just reflect on that, what that means, what each and every one of those people might have done if they had lived.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative KELLY for being a tireless voice, which we need in these challenging times.

Mr. Speaker, 5 years ago tonight, it was cold and snowy in Connecticut. The families of Newtown had picked up their children from school. They were getting ready for the holidays. It was already snowy and cold, no one having any thought on December 12 that, in 2 days, their lives—and America’s lives—would be changed by the reality of what gun violence has done and is doing to this country.

So, tonight, I want to read the names of the 20 children and six educators who were brutally gunned down and murdered in Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut:

Charlotte Bacon, Daniel Barden, Rachel D’Avino, Olivia Engel, Josephine Gay, Ana Marquez-Greene, Dylan Hockley, Dawn Hochsprung, Madeleine Hsu, Catherine Hubbard, Chase Kowalski, Jesse Lewis, James Mattioli, Grace McDonnell, Anne Marie Murphy, Emilie Parker, Jack Pinto, Noah Pozner, Caroline Previdi, Jessica Rekos, Avielle Richman, Lauren Rousseau, Mary Sherlach, Victoria Soto, Benjamin Wheeler, and Allison Wyatt.

Mr. Speaker, we can and we must do better in this great country. We must do better for all those who have been taken from us. We must do better by taking action in this, the people’s House.

The people are watching, the people are waiting, and they deserve that we do our best—and not to honor only with words and silence and prayers, important as those are, but to honor, even more importantly, by taking action to save future lives.

Again, my thanks and my admiration to Representative KELLY for her extraordinary leadership and persistence.

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman ESTY for her

words, her commitment, and her voice in making sure that those 26 lives will never be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I have been reading names for nearly half an hour, and we still have stacks and stacks of names—the names of Americans taken by gun violence—to still read. And, tragically, every day the list of names grows and grows as we do nothing to stop it.

Children are murdered in their kindergarten classroom and we remain silent. Mothers and their children are killed in Cracker Barrel parking lots and we still do not act.

Hadiya Pendleton, a smart, charming, and talented young woman who performed at Barack Obama’s inauguration has been resting for nearly 5 years. How much longer must she wait, Mr. Speaker?

Country concerts, nightclubs, and even a congressional baseball practice have been shooting galleries, and the majority callously often calls for thoughts and prayers and moments of silence.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to crawl out from under the gun lobby checkbook and do something—anything—to save American lives.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my good friend and colleague, Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY for tonight’s special order hour on gun violence.

Congresswoman KELLY is a stalwart leader against gun violence and serves as a visible, out-front advocate for putting an end to the gun violence epidemic.

Far too many children, families, and communities have been devastated and destroyed by a gun inappropriately in the hands of a shooter.

We have seen far too many deaths, too many young African-Americans with guns, too many killed by guns.

My district in Central Ohio has seen an alarming rise in gun violence.

Just this week, Columbus saw its 130th homicide of the year, which is closing in on an all-time record.

We can and must do better.

I stand with Congresswoman KELLY in her relentless efforts, calling on the Congress to honor victims through action.

We can join together to pass commonsense gun laws—background checks; no fly-no buy; and safety locks.

Gun violence is a health epidemic—one that we cannot address in isolation.

We must fund mental health programs, we must address the needs of urban communities, and we must provide sustainable community and economic development initiatives to reduce violence—like community policing coupled with commonsense gun reforms.

Tonight, Congresswoman KELLY puts a face on the victims of gun violence. I join and salute her for reading the names of victims.

As we read the names, let us remember that, gun violence isn’t a Democrat or Republican issue—it is an American issue requiring an American solution.

SENATE BILL REFERRED

A bill of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker’s table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. 447. An act to require reporting on acts of certain foreign countries on Holocaust era assets and related issues; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o’clock and 24 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, December 13, 2017, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker’s table and referred as follows:

3367. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency’s withdrawal of direct final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Maryland; Nonattainment New Source Review Requirements for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard [EPA-R03-OAR-2017-0398; FRL-9971-14-Region 3] received November 21, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3368. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency’s withdrawal of direct final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Maryland; 2011 Base Year Inventory for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard for the Baltimore, Maryland Nonattainment Area [EPA-R03-OAR-2017-0396; FRL-9971-13-Region 3] received November 21, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3369. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency’s withdrawal of direct final rule — State of Nebraska; Approval of Nebraska’s Air Quality Implementation Plan, Operating Permits Program, and 112(l) Program; Revision to Nebraska Administrative Code [EPA-R07-OAR-2017-0485; FRL-9971-15-Region 7] received November 21, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3370. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency’s withdrawal of direct final rule — Air Plan Approval; GA; Emission Reduction Credits [EPA-R04-OAR-2009-0226; FRL-9971-12-Region 4] received November 21, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3371. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency’s withdrawal of direct final rule — State of Nebraska; Approval of Nebraska Air Quality Implementation Plans; Adoption of a

New Chapter Under the Nebraska Administrative Code [EPA-R07-2017-0386; FRL-9971-16-Region 7] received November 21, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3372. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's withdrawal of direct final rule — State of Missouri; Approval of Missouri Air Quality Implementation Plans; Infrastructure SIP Requirements for the 2010 Sulfur Dioxide National Ambient Air Quality Standard [EPA-R07-OAR-2017-0515; FRL-9971-22-Region 7] received November 21, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

3373. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's withdrawal of direct final rule — State of Missouri; Approval of Missouri Air Quality Implementation Plans; Infrastructure SIP Requirements for the 2008 Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard [EPA-R07-OAR-2015-0356; FRL-9971-21-Region 7] received November 21, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. WALDEN: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 2872. A bill to amend the Federal Power Act to promote hydropower development at existing nonpowered dams, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115-461, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union.

Mr. WOODALL: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 657. A resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2396) to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to update the exception for certain annual notices provided by financial institutions, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4015) to improve the quality of proxy advisory firms for the protection of investors and the U.S. economy, and in the public interest, by fostering accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and competition in the proxy advisory firm industry (Rept. 115-462). Referred to the House Calendar.

Mr. BUCK: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 658. A resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1638) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees on the estimated total assets under direct or indirect control by certain senior Iranian leaders and other figures, and for other proposes, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4324) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to make certifications with respect to United States and foreign financial institutions' aircraft-related transactions involving Iran, and for other purposes (Rept. 115-463). Referred to the House Calendar.

DISCHARGE OF COMMITTEE

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committees on Natural Resources and Transportation and Infrastructure discharged from further consideration. H.R. 2872 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

REPORTED BILL SEQUENTIALLY REFERRED

Under clause 2 of rule XII, bills referred as follows:

Mr. WALDEN: Committee on Energy and Commerce. H.R. 2872. A bill to amend the Federal Power Act to promote hydropower development at existing nonpowered dams, and for other purposes; with an amendment; referred to the Committees on Natural Resources and Transportation and Infrastructure for a period ending not later than December 12, 2017, for consideration of such provisions of the bill and amendment as fall within the jurisdiction of those committees pursuant to clause 1(m) of rule X, and clause 1(r) of rule X respectively.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. NUNES (for himself and Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 4616. A bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to provide for a temporary moratorium on the employer mandate and to provide for a delay in the implementation of the excise tax on high cost employer-sponsored health coverage; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. PAULSEN (for himself, Mrs. WALORSKI, and Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee):

H.R. 4617. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a temporary moratorium on the medical device excise tax; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Ms. JENKINS of Kansas:

H.R. 4618. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a temporary moratorium on certain taxes affecting purchases of prescription medication; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. CURBELO of Florida (for himself, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, and Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico):

H.R. 4619. A bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to provide temporary relief from the annual fee imposed on health insurance providers, to the extent that such fee is due to Puerto Rican health insurance; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. NOEM (for herself and Ms. SINEMA):

H.R. 4620. A bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to provide temporary relief from the annual fee imposed on health insurance providers; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself, Mr. COHEN, and Mr. MCGOVERN):

H.R. 4621. A bill to galvanize United States Government programs in support of brain health for global victims of autism, hydrocephalus and Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for con-

sideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. COHEN (for himself and Mr. DESAULNIER):

H.R. 4622. A bill to reduce the number of preventable deaths and injuries caused by underride crashes, to improve motor carrier and passenger motor vehicle safety, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. ROKITA:

H.R. 4623. A bill to require each Executive agency to reduce the workforce of the agency after the enactment of a law that requires the consolidation or elimination of a program or project within the agency, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. VEASEY (for himself, Mr. AGUILAR, Ms. NORTON, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, and Ms. JACKSON LEE):

H.R. 4624. A bill to amend section 240(c)(7)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act to eliminate the time limit on the filing of a motion to reopen a removal proceeding if the basis of the motion is fraud, negligence, misrepresentation, or extortion by, or the attempted, promised, or actual practice of law without authorization on the part of, a representative; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DELANEY (for himself, Mr. OLSON, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. KHANNA, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. DESAULNIER, and Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 4625. A bill to require the Secretary of Commerce to establish the Federal Advisory Committee on the Development and Implementation of Artificial Intelligence, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Science, Space, and Technology, Education and the Workforce, Foreign Affairs, the Judiciary, and Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. JACKSON LEE (for herself, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. COHEN, Ms. LEE, and Mr. HASTINGS):

H.R. 4626. A bill to preserve knowledge and promote education about jazz in the United States and abroad; to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. DONOVAN (for himself, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. MCCAUL, and Mr. KING of New York):

H.R. 4627. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize expenditures to combat emerging terrorist threats, including vehicular attacks, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security.

By Mr. GIBBS:

H.R. 4628. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to allow for modified permits for industrial minerals remaining operations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 4629. A bill to direct the Department of Transportation to issue regulations to require enhanced security measures for shipments of security sensitive material, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. PEARCE:

H.R. 4630. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to ensure military airports are eligible for certain grant funds; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. QUIGLEY (for himself, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. BRAT, Mr. COOPER, and Mr. SOTO):

H.R. 4631. A bill to require the Director of the Government Publishing Office to establish and maintain a website accessible to the public that allows the public to obtain electronic copies of all congressionally mandated reports in one place, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. SPEIER (for herself, Mr. JONES, and Mr. TAKANO):

H.R. 4632. A bill to count revenues from military and veteran education programs toward the limit on Federal revenues that certain proprietary institutions of higher education are allowed to receive for purposes of section 487 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition to the Committees on Armed Services, and Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. WOMACK (for himself, Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. RUSSELL, and Mr. CARTER of Texas):

H.R. 4633. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit individuals who are eligible for assistance under a Department of Defense educational assistance program or authority to use such tuition assistance for licensing and certification programs offered by entities other than an institution of higher education; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BACON (for himself, Mr. FORTENBERRY, and Mr. SMITH of Nebraska):

H. Res. 656. A resolution honoring the 100th anniversary of Boys Town; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. NOLAN:

H. Res. 659. A resolution amending the Rules of the House of Representatives to establish a point of order against legislation that cuts Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid benefits; to the Committee on Rules.

By Mr. LOWENTHAL (for himself, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. BEYER, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. KILMER, Ms. LEE, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Mr. LIPINSKI, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. MCEACHIN, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. POCAN, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. RUSH, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SOTO, Mr. TONKO, and Ms. GABBARD):

H. Res. 660. A resolution recognizing the 2d anniversary of the adoption of the international Paris Agreement on climate change; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. LOWENTHAL (for himself, Mr. CHABOT, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. SHERMAN, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. ROYCE of California,

Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. YOHO, and Mr. ROHRBACHER):

H. Res. 661. A resolution reaffirming the commitment of the United States to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in Cambodia; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

PRIVATE BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 3 of rule XII,

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire introduced a bill (H.R. 4634) for the relief of Arpita Kurdekar, Girish Kurdekar, and Vandana Kurdekar; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. NUNES:

H.R. 4616.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. PAULSEN:

H.R. 4617.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8

To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Ms. JENKINS of Kansas:

H.R. 4618.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8:

The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States; but all duties, imposts and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States.

Article I, Section 9:

No money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in consequence of appropriations made by Law.

By Mr. CURBELO of Florida:

H.R. 4619.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section 8 Clause 3 of the United States Constitution

By Mrs. NOEM:

H.R. 4620.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey:

H.R. 4621.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. COHEN:

H.R. 4622.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. ROKITA:

H.R. 4623.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted Congress under Article I of the United States Constitution, including the power granted Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clause 18, of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. VEASEY:

H.R. 4624.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 4

By Mr. DELANEY:

H.R. 4625.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section 8

By Ms. JACKSON LEE:

H.R. 4626.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clauses 1, 8, and 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. DONOVAN:

H.R. 4627.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18. To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. GIBBS:

H.R. 4628.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution, specifically Clause 3 (related to regulation of Commerce among the several States).

By Ms. NORTON:

H.R. 4629.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

clause 3 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. PEARCE:

H.R. 4630.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8, clause 18 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. QUIGLEY:

H.R. 4631.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution

By Ms. SPEIER:

H.R. 4632.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. WOMACK:

H.R. 4633.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section Eight.

By Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire:

H.R. 4634.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section 8, Clause 4 of the United States Constitution, the Naturalization Clause: "The Congress shall have Power To establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization. . . ."

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 435: Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. CICILLINE, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, and Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.
 H.R. 444: Mr. SWALWELL of California.
 H.R. 535: Mr. STIVERS.
 H.R. 548: Ms. MCSALLY.
 H.R. 619: Mr. ROUZER.
 H.R. 632: Mr. KIND, Mr. NEAL, Mr. PRICE of North Carolina, Mr. GIBBS, Ms. PLASKETT, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. SARBANES, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, and Mr. KENNEDY.
 H.R. 681: Mr. ROSS, Mr. MOOLENAAR, Mr. KNIGHT, and Mr. MCKINLEY.
 H.R. 747: Ms. JAYAPAL and Mr. EVANS.
 H.R. 750: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.
 H.R. 754: Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. ROKITA, and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas.
 H.R. 820: Mr. COOPER, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. HILL, Mr. KELLY of Mississippi, Mr. GOMEZ, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. BERA, and Mr. MCEACHIN.
 H.R. 1057: Mr. COOK.
 H.R. 1143: Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD.
 H.R. 1160: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
 H.R. 1298: Mr. HIGGINS of New York and Mr. LANGEVIN.
 H.R. 1318: Mr. LOWENTHAL.
 H.R. 1406: Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. BERA, and Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.
 H.R. 1456: Ms. GABBARD and Mr. BERA.
 H.R. 1494: Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.
 H.R. 1552: Mr. SANFORD.
 H.R. 1734: Ms. SINEMA.
 H.R. 1777: Ms. MENG.
 H.R. 1838: Mr. BERA.
 H.R. 1847: Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.
 H.R. 1861: Ms. MATSUI.
 H.R. 1939: Mr. CARTER of Georgia.
 H.R. 1987: Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico.
 H.R. 2077: Mr. BERA and Mr. SCHNEIDER.
 H.R. 2093: Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. LOFGREN, Ms. ESHOO, and Mr. RASKIN.
 H.R. 2164: Mr. DEFazio.
 H.R. 2219: Mr. LYNCH, and Mr. MESSER.
 H.R. 2234: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
 H.R. 2345: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut, Mr. CALVERT, and Mr. CURTIS.
 H.R. 2358: Mr. ELLISON.
 H.R. 2366: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
 H.R. 2472: Mr. CÁRDENAS.
 H.R. 2514: Mr. VELA, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, and Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania.
 H.R. 2542: Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico.
 H.R. 2595: Mr. TED LIEU of California and Mr. CICILLINE.
 H.R. 2652: Mr. DESANTIS.

H.R. 2740: Ms. SPEIER, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas.
 H.R. 2747: Mr. MEEHAN and Ms. MENG.
 H.R. 2773: Mr. BOST.
 H.R. 2790: Mr. KEATING and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.
 H.R. 2820: Ms. ESTY of Connecticut.
 H.R. 2832: Mr. BUCK.
 H.R. 2856: Ms. TENNEY.
 H.R. 2862: Mr. LOBIONDO.
 H.R. 3108: Mr. TED LIEU of California.
 H.R. 3127: Mr. ROKITA.
 H.R. 3128: Mr. ROKITA.
 H.R. 3238: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.
 H.R. 3330: Mr. MEADOWS.
 H.R. 3378: Mr. BERA.
 H.R. 3397: Ms. ESHOO and Mr. QUIGLEY.
 H.R. 3402: Mr. MACARTHUR.
 H.R. 3513: Mr. SWALWELL of California and Mr. HUIZENGA.
 H.R. 3545: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. PAULSEN, and Mr. BERA.
 H.R. 3596: Mr. LOUDERMILK.
 H.R. 3635: Mr. LANCE.
 H.R. 3671: Mrs. LOWEY.
 H.R. 3730: Ms. PINGREE, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MARINO, Mr. COMER, Ms. ESHOO, and Mr. YODER.
 H.R. 3759: Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. JENKINS of Kansas, and Mr. MCGOVERN.
 H.R. 3820: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
 H.R. 3842: Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. COHEN, and Ms. FUDGE.
 H.R. 3848: Mr. NORCROSS.
 H.R. 3867: Mr. POSEY.
 H.R. 3879: Miss RICE of New York.
 H.R. 3889: Mr. SANFORD.
 H.R. 3931: Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN.
 H.R. 4007: Mr. RUTHERFORD.
 H.R. 4099: Mr. ROYCE of California and Ms. SPEIER.
 H.R. 4133: Mr. LAMBORN.
 H.R. 4143: Mr. BERA and Mr. COFFMAN.
 H.R. 4145: Miss RICE of New York.
 H.R. 4146: Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire.
 H.R. 4179: Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD and Ms. HANABUSA.
 H.R. 4183: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
 H.R. 4207: Ms. PINGREE.
 H.R. 4223: Mr. CICILLINE.
 H.R. 4234: Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.
 H.R. 4255: Mr. EVANS.
 H.R. 4258: Mr. CAPUANO, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Mrs. BEATTY, and Ms. NORTON.
 H.R. 4260: Ms. MOORE.
 H.R. 4274: Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. GARRETT, and Mr. BROOKS of Alabama.
 H.R. 4311: Mr. DESANTIS.
 H.R. 4318: Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.
 H.R. 4345: Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. SMUCKER, Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. NEWHOUSE, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mr. FASO, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. LANCE, Mr. MACARTHUR, Mr. UPTON, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. WALDEN, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mr.

DONOVAN, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. SOTO, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. MEEKS, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, and Mr. PERLMUTTER.
 H.R. 4382: Ms. MENG, Mr. SOTO, and Ms. NORTON.
 H.R. 4391: Ms. ESHOO.
 H.R. 4392: Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. SIRES, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, Mr. REICHERT, and Mr. KHANNA.
 H.R. 4395: Mr. HECK and Mr. COOK.
 H.R. 4396: Mr. KATKO, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. SOTO, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. Cartwright, Mr. EVANS, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, and Mr. SARBANES.
 H.R. 4397: Mr. HUNTER.
 H.R. 4423: Mr. CARTER of Texas.
 H.R. 4458: Mr. ROKITA.
 H.R. 4459: Mr. LARSON of Connecticut.
 H.R. 4461: Mr. SMITH of Nebraska.
 H.R. 4465: Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico.
 H.R. 4473: Mr. WITTMAN and Mr. YODER.
 H.R. 4474: Miss RICE of New York.
 H.R. 4494: Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, Mr. ROYCE of California, and Mr. MARCHANT.
 H.R. 4537: Mr. MESSER.
 H.R. 4541: Mr. HUFFMAN and Mr. DESAULNIER.
 H.R. 4547: Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Mr. MARCHANT, and Mr. RENACCI.
 H.R. 4563: Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas.
 H.R. 4565: Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire and Mr. TAYLOR.
 H.R. 4573: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.
 H.R. 4577: Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN.
 H.R. 4578: Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN.
 H.R. 4581: Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN and Mrs. DEMINGS.
 H.R. 4585: Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. O'ROURKE, Mr. MOULTON, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. LYNCH, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Ms. HANABUSA, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. POLIS, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Mr. CRIST, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, and Mr. RASKIN.
 H.R. 4587: Mr. RUIZ, Mr. JONES, Mr. BEYER, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. COHEN, Ms. NORTON, Mr. GALLEGGO, Mr. POCAN, and Mr. YOHO.
 H. Con. Res. 13: Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, and Mr. GOTTHEIMER.
 H. Con. Res. 74: Ms. MOORE.
 H. Con. Res. 95: Ms. JACKSON LEE and Mr. DELANEY.
 H. Res. 129: Mr. NORMAN.
 H. Res. 407: Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.
 H. Res. 529: Mr. PERLMUTTER.
 H. Res. 624: Mr. SHIMKUS.
 H. Res. 643: Mr. AUSTIN SCOTT of Georgia.
 H. Res. 648: Mr. MESSER.



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No. 202

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BEN SASSE, a Senator from the State of Nebraska.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Lord God, our shelter in the time of storms, thank You for Your mercies that are new each day. Lord, through many dangers You have brought us, and we would not be guilty of ingratitude. We are grateful for catastrophes that haven't happened, for the unseen angels who have guarded our Nation and those we love. May our lawmakers remember that all efforts to defend ourselves will fail without Your sovereign will and loving providence. May our Senators not put their trust only in their ingenuity and courage but instead lean on You, the Author and Finisher of our faith. Today, lead our legislators on right paths as they trust You to clear the road on which they travel. Order their steps and direct their way, training them in Your school of humility so that they will strive to bring glory to You.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, December 12, 2017.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BEN SASSE, a Senator from the State of Nebraska, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SASSE thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

NOMINATION OF DON WILLETT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday the Senate advanced the nomination of Mr. Leonard Steven Grasiz to be a judge on the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals. Mr. Grasiz has sterling credentials and strong support from the Nebraska legal community. I proudly voted to advance his nomination, and the Senate will confirm him soon.

Next, we will vote to advance the nomination of another well-qualified individual, Texas Supreme Court Justice Don Willett, to serve on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. Justice Willett respects the rule of law and our foundational legal principles, and he will be a strong addition to the Fifth Circuit.

His story is an inspirational one. Adopted at a young age and raised by a widowed mother in a town of 32 people, he was the first person in his family to graduate from high school. As our colleague Senator CORNYN said at the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, "Justice Willett's life [reflects] the best of Texas, and the best of America."

From these humble beginnings, Justice Willett has led a remarkable career.

After graduating from Duke School of Law, he clerked for Judge Jerre Williams of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, the panel he has now been nominated to join.

He spent a short time in private practice before entering public service in then-Gov. George W. Bush's administration as a legal and policy adviser. When President Bush entered the White House, Justice Willett joined him as the Special Assistant to the President. In that role, he helped shape the domestic legal policy of the Bush administration, especially in the President's efforts to increase charitable activities in neighborhoods across the Nation.

The next year, he became Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Justice Department's Office of Legal Policy. There, he oversaw both civil and criminal policy initiatives, including what became the PROTECT Act of 2003, which increased law enforcement's ability to prevent and prosecute violent crimes against children.

Afterward, Justice Willett returned to Texas to serve as the Deputy Attorney General for Legal Counsel. As the top legal aide to then-Attorney General Greg Abbott, he advised the office on a wide variety of legal matters.

In 2005, he was appointed to serve as a justice on the Texas Supreme Court. Elected to a full term in 2006 and re-elected in 2012, Justice Willett has served with distinction on the Texas high court now for over a decade. During that time, he has ruled fairly and impartially.

Four of his former colleagues on the Texas Supreme Court wrote a letter to the Judiciary Committee supporting Justice Willett's nomination. They wrote, "His demonstrated belief is that the courts should enforce both constitutional rights and constitutional limitations and uphold the rule of law, but not enforce a personal agenda."

"On occasion," they continued, "we did not agree with each other or with

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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him on the disposition of an appeal but we respected Don's opinions and never doubted his devotion to principle."

In addition, the retired Texas Supreme Court justice, Wallace Jefferson, recommended Justice Willett's nomination, writing that he will be "a thoughtful, hardworking, diligent, and influential member of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit."

Justice Willett has also been recognized for his excellence by the Texas Review of Law and Politics, which named him its Distinguished Jurist of the Year in 2014.

I would like to commend President Trump for nominating Justice Willett to the Fifth Circuit. Under Chairman GRASSLEY's leadership, the Judiciary Committee has done an excellent job processing this nomination and many others.

By joining the Fifth Circuit, Justice Willett will use his talents to continue to serve his State and his Nation. I look forward to advancing his nomination, and I urge my colleagues to join me in doing so.

JUSTICE FOR UNCOMPENSATED SURVIVORS TODAY (JUST) ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 274, S. 447.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 447) to require reporting on acts of certain foreign countries on Holocaust era assets and related issues.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Justice for Uncompensated Survivors Today (JUST) Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. REPORT ON HOLOCAUST ERA ASSETS AND RELATED ISSUES.

(a) *DEFINITIONS.—In this section:*

(1) *APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term "appropriate congressional committees" means—*

(A) *the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate;*

(B) *the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate;*

(C) *the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives; and*

(D) *the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.*

(2) *COVERED COUNTRIES.—The term "covered countries" means participants in the 2009 Holocaust Era Assets Conference that are determined by the Secretary of State, or the Secretary's designee, in consultation with expert nongovernmental organizations, to be countries of particular concern relative to the issues listed in subsection (b).*

(3) *WRONGFULLY SEIZED OR TRANSFERRED.—The term "wrongfully seized or transferred" in-*

cludes confiscations, expropriations, nationalizations, forced sales or transfers, and sales or transfers under duress during the Holocaust era or the period of Communist rule of a covered country.

(b) *REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of State shall submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees that assesses and describes the nature and extent of national laws and enforceable policies of covered countries regarding the identification and the return of or restitution for wrongfully seized or transferred Holocaust era assets consistent with, and evaluated with respect to, the goals and objectives of the 2009 Holocaust Era Assets Conference, including—*

(1) *the return to the rightful owner of any property, including religious or communal property, that was wrongfully seized or transferred;*

(2) *if return of any property described in paragraph (1) is no longer possible, the provision of comparable substitute property or the payment of equitable compensation to the rightful owner in accordance with principles of justice and through an expeditious claims-driven administrative process that is just, transparent, and fair;*

(3) *in the case of heirless property, the provision of property or compensation to assist needy Holocaust survivors, to support Holocaust education, and for other purposes;*

(4) *the extent to which such laws and policies are implemented and enforced in practice, including through any applicable administrative or judicial processes; and*

(5) *to the extent practicable, the mechanism for and an overview of progress toward the resolution of claims for United States citizen Holocaust survivors and United States citizen family members of Holocaust victims.*

(c) *SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that after the submission of the report described in subsection (b), the Secretary of State should continue to report to Congress on Holocaust era assets and related issues in a manner that is consistent with the manner in which the Department of State reported on such matters before the date of the enactment of the Act.*

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendment be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The bill (S. 447), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Leonard Steven Grasz, of Nebraska, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last week, the House and Senate passed a short-term funding bill to keep the government open as Republican and Democratic negotiators continue to work on a long-term spending deal. The negotiations are advancing well, but many issues remain to be resolved.

First and foremost, we must resolve the issue of the spending caps. If we do nothing, there will be painful and unnecessary cuts to both defense spending and programs that invest directly in jobs and economic development for the middle class in early January. We must lift the spending caps for defense and also those urgent domestic priorities in equal measure. That has been the basis of the successful budget agreements going back several years and as recently as April of this year. There was parity between defense and nondefense, and that is how it ought to stay. That is what brought us home to a good agreement and no shutdowns in previous years.

As the opioid crisis continues to rage, dimming the bright future of so many Americans, we have a moral obligation to step up our country's support for addiction treatment and recovery. I have had a father cry in my arms because his son was online waiting to get into a treatment program, but it was too crowded. He had to wait, and his son died of an overdose before he could get in. We can't have that in America.

So many of our young people, the flower of our youth, are dying or being hurt so badly, addicted, with this opioid crisis. We cannot sit by, just as we cannot sit by with foreign threats that plague our country.

As veterans continue to struggle to find the quality healthcare they deserve after bravely serving this Nation, we should be making additional investments in veterans' healthcare and veterans hospitals. Just as we need to help

our soldiers abroad, we need to help those who have fought for us, risked their lives for us, and now have healthcare problems.

As hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of miners, truckdrivers, construction workers, and food service workers approach retirement age, we have to make sure the pension plans promised to them have enough in the bank to fulfill that promise. These people painstakingly paid every month into their plans, and so did their employers. They would forgo larger salary increases so they could make sure they are taken care of when they retire.

Now that the pension funds—in good part because of the crash of 2008—don't have the money they need, these people should not be left out. Hard-working American families deserve to retire with the dignity and security they have earned. If we don't meet these pension obligations today, they are going to cost the government a whole lot more tomorrow. That is why Democrats are fighting for a pension solution in the year-end spending bill.

These are all urgent priorities. There are more. They can't wait another day, just as we must make sure our men and women in uniform have the resources and support they need to do their job. Let's do both in a bipartisan way.

As Democrats continue to push for desperately needed funding to combat the opioid crisis, improve veterans' healthcare, and shore up pension plans, we will also be pushing to reauthorize CHIP—the Children's Health Insurance Program—and community health centers, as well as dealing with certain healthcare programs that have expired.

We have to do more for the Americans in Texas, Florida, Louisiana, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands who are still recovering from devastating natural disasters.

We are in the process of negotiating with Republicans to provide a significant investment in border security in exchange for DACA. These talks continue to progress, and I am hopeful we can reach an agreement on that issue as well.

We have a lot to get done before the end of the year. We don't have much time to do it, but with the concerted effort of both parties, negotiating in good faith, I believe we can reach an agreement acceptable not to every Member of either Chamber but to large numbers of Members on both sides of the aisle so we can pass our agreement by a wide margin.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, for more than two decades, under both Repub-

lican and Democratic Presidents and Republican and Democratic Congresses, the United States pursued a bipartisan light-touch approach to internet regulation. The internet as we know it today flourished under this light-touch approach, much to the benefit of American consumers and the domestic economy. It also made America the world leader in internet technology and positioned us to continue that leadership in the years to come.

In 2002, broadband internet was classified by the Federal Communications Commission, or FCC, our Nation's communications regulator, as an information service under title I of the Communications Act. This classification exempted the internet from burdensome regulations contained in title II of the Communications Act, which were designed in the Depression era for the old telephone monopolies.

Under the Obama administration, we saw repeated attempts to bring the internet under greater government control. Finally, in 2015, at the explicit direction of President Obama, the FCC did as it was told and reclassified broadband internet access service as a title II service, subjecting broadband internet to onerous common carrier rules and opening the door to further regulation, including price regulation. Not surprisingly, with heavier regulation came a decline in broadband investment. Indeed, we have seen private investment in broadband infrastructure decline over the past 2 years. This decline should not be mistaken as a sign that broadband infrastructure is not needed. In fact, the opposite is true, as there are still 34 million Americans who lack access to broadband services at home.

In States like my home State of South Dakota, encouraging broadband deployment continues to be critical to ensuring that rural areas have the same economic opportunity as their urban counterparts. The Federal Government should not be putting up barriers to broadband deployment; it should be removing them. Congress and the FCC need to ensure regulatory framework is in place that protects consumers but that doesn't stand in the way of investment and innovation.

Prior to the FCC's 2015 actions to bring broadband under title II, and for more than a decade under the light-touch regulatory framework of title I, we saw unprecedented growth that revolutionized our daily lives and allowed us to stay better connected with our loved ones. The internet created new jobs and expanded opportunities for education and commerce. It became the greatest engine of innovation for our times.

Despite the fearmongering and doomsday rhetoric that continues to plague this debate, when the FCC moves forward and restores the internet to its pre-2015 regulatory status, the internet will continue to thrive and serve as an engine for future economic growth.

I commend Chairman Pai at the FCC and the entire Commission for all the hard work over the last year that has gotten us to this point. I also commend Chairman Pai for his commitment to transparency throughout this process. For the first time in the history of the Commission, under Chairman Pai's leadership, the public was able to view the Restoring Internet Freedom item 3 weeks prior to the FCC's vote. That is true of all documents to be considered by the Commission—a major departure from the previous administration's actions, which were often not made public until the very last minute. As a result of Chairman Pai's commitment to transparency, the public has the benefit of not only viewing the item but also participating in the process.

Despite attempts by those more interested in politicizing the issue and distracting from this debate, this item resulted in the most well informed and most exhaustive record of comments ever submitted to the FCC. The FCC is now well positioned to move forward to ensure that the internet is open and free. Regrettably, however, debate doesn't end there. The outcry from opponents of the FCC's proposal is that the internet will fall apart without adequate consumer protections.

There is obviously immense passion that follows the issue of net neutrality. Americans care deeply about preserving a free and open internet, as do I and so many of my colleagues in the U.S. Senate on both sides of the aisle.

As I have stated repeatedly and I will say again today, congressional action is the only way to solve the endless back-and-forth on net neutrality rules that we have seen over the past several years. If my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and those who claim to support net neutrality rules want to enshrine protections for consumers with the backing of the law, I call on them today to join me in discussing legislation that would do just that. While we are not going to agree on everything, I believe there is much room for compromise.

Many of us in Congress already agree on many of the principles of net neutrality. True supporters of an open internet should be demanding such legislative protections today, not posturing while waiting for years during protracted legal proceedings or waiting for the political winds to shift.

If Republicans and Democrats have the political support to work together on such a compromise, we can enact a regulatory framework that will stand the test of time. I have stood willing to work with any and all supporters of net neutrality protections for many years now, and I continue to stand ready today.

It is time for Congress to settle this debate, and I welcome discussion on ways to ensure a free and open internet for decades to come.

TAX REFORM BILL

Mr. President, it has been a good week in the U.S. Senate. We are getting closer and closer to the finish line

on tax reform. That means we are getting closer and closer to real relief for the American people. Our legislation is going to cut tax bills for American families, it is going to increase their wages, and it is going to give them access to new jobs and opportunities.

The tax bill the Senate passed on December 2 would cut income tax rates for American families starting next month. It would double the standard deduction. It would double the child tax credit. That would mean a substantially lower tax bill for American families next year. Under our bill, a family of four making \$73,000 a year would see a \$2,200 tax cut.

But our bill doesn't just provide immediate relief for families. Our bill also sets families up for economic health for the long-term by giving them access to higher wages, new jobs, and better opportunities.

How does it do this? By improving the playing field for American businesses. In order for individual Americans to thrive economically, we need American businesses to thrive.

Thriving businesses create jobs and provide opportunities; they increase wages and invest in their workers. But our current Tax Code has not been helping businesses thrive. For years now, our tax laws have left businesses of all sizes struggling under the burden of high tax rates and an outdated tax system that has left American businesses at a disadvantage in the global economy. Small businesses employ nearly half of American workers and create a majority of new jobs in this country, but right now small businesses face high tax rates that can make it difficult for these businesses to even survive, much less thrive and expand their operations.

Our bill fixes this. To start with, our bill implements a new deduction for passthrough businesses, such as partnerships, LLCs, and S corporations. This deduction would allow them to keep more of their money, which would allow them to reinvest in their operations to increase wages and to hire new workers.

Our bill also reforms current provisions in the Tax Code that frequently leave small businesses with little cash on hand. Under our legislation, small businesses would be able to recover the capital they have invested in inventory and machinery much more quickly and, in certain cases, immediately. This, in turn, would free up capital small businesses could use to expand and create jobs.

Our legislation also includes provisions that I helped develop that would simplify accounting rules for small businesses, which would also help reduce their tax burden, leaving more of their earnings to reinvest in their businesses and in their workers.

In addition to providing relief to small businesses, our bill will boost American wages by lowering our massive corporate tax rate. Our Nation's corporate tax rate is currently the

highest in the industrialized world, which puts U.S. businesses at a major disadvantage next to their international competitors. Reducing the corporate tax rate will enable U.S. businesses to compete on a more level playing field, freeing up money that U.S. businesses can use to create jobs and to increase wages.

The White House Council of Economic Advisers estimates that reducing the corporate tax rate to 20 percent would increase wages for U.S. households by \$4,000. That is money that families could use to save for retirement, help pay for a child's education, replace an aging vehicle, or invest in their home.

Our bill would also boost wages and increase opportunities for Americans by ending the outdated tax framework that is driving American companies to keep jobs and profits overseas. Our Nation currently operates under a so-called worldwide tax system. That means that American companies pay U.S. taxes on the profit they make here at home as well as on part of the profits they make abroad, once they bring that money back to the United States. The problem with this is that American companies are already paying taxes to foreign governments on the money they make abroad. When they bring that money home, they can end up having to pay taxes again on part of those profits at the highest tax rate in the industrialized world. It is no surprise that this discourages businesses from bringing their profits back to the United States to invest in their domestic operations, new jobs, and increased wages.

Our bill replaces our outdated worldwide tax system with a territorial tax system. Under our legislation, American companies would no longer face the double taxation that has encouraged them to send their investments and their operations overseas. Instead, U.S. companies would have a strong incentive to invest their profits at home in American jobs and American workers.

All in all, the Tax Foundation estimates that in addition to increasing wages, our bill would create nearly 1 million new jobs for American workers and boost the size of the economy by 3.7 percent.

This week, Members of the House and the Senate—myself included—are working on the final draft of comprehensive tax reform legislation. We hope to send a final bill to the President next week. I am thankful to have been able to be part of this tax-writing effort.

The bill we are finalizing, which is the product of years of work by Members of both parties, represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to profoundly change the American people's lives for the better. Our tax bill will provide real, immediate, direct relief to Americans and do it now, and it will give Americans access to the kinds of jobs, wages, and opportunities they

need for a secure and prosperous future. After years of economic stagnation, the bill we are drafting will usher in a new era of economic dynamism in this country, and it will send a message to the world that America is serious about competing and winning in the 21st century.

I am grateful to my colleagues on the House and Senate tax-writing committees for all the work they have done to put together this legislation, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on the conference committee to finish our final draft and to get this bill across the finish line for the American people.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT *pro tempore*. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. STRANGE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I approach this topic with a little bit of trepidation. Ordinarily when people make outrageous, outlandish, and unbelievable statements, I usually think it is best just to let them go because when people make these kinds of statements, I think they lose their own credibility, and maybe it doesn't bear any particular comment by anybody else or a desire or an attempt to refute it. But on the subject of tax reform, there have been some incredible statements that have been made, and I am going to mention a few of those because I think they really paint an ugly picture of what is supposed to be a debate on tax reform policy, but I think probably they relate more to sort of the nature of what passes for debate here in Washington, DC—and particularly the Congress—on matters of important public policy. In other words, there isn't a lot of debate. There is accusation after accusation. It gets repeated on social media, then the press picks it up, and then people just assume, well, it must be true since nobody has ever denied it or offered any contrary narrative.

For example, the House minority leader apparently had the time to read every bill that has ever been written since the year 1789 because she felt comfortable calling this tax bill, which is still in the process of being written—reconciling the House and Senate versions—she called it the “worst bill in the history of the United States Congress.” She has been busy if she has read every bill since 1789. Then she went further because that apparently wasn't enough for her. She said that our tax bill isn't just poor legislation; she said that it is an existential threat to the Nation and possibly the entire planet. Can you believe that? An existential threat to the Nation and possibly the entire planet.

Well, you can see why perhaps I was reluctant to come address these accusations, because I think anybody who would make those kinds of accusations has lost all credibility. But acting either as a prophet or an amateur astrologist—we are not quite sure—she called the prospect of passing tax reform “Armageddon.”

Well, it is hard to know what to say or do in the face of that sort of rhetoric because, frankly, this tax reform bill is a good thing. I wish our friends across the aisle, the Democrats, would join us in trying to make it better. That is what happened the last time we tried to do this or this Congress tried to do it.

In 1986, a Republican President; a Democratic Senator from New Jersey, Senator Bill Bradley; Dan Rostenkowski from Chicago, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, a Democrat; and other Members of Congress came together to try to reform our Tax Code, and they were successful in doing it against all odds.

But today, we have an entirely different scenario. We have Republicans seeing that the economy is growing at a very slow rate and that wages for most workers have been flat for the last 10 years and realizing that our current Tax Code is counterproductive when it comes to encouraging investment, job creation, and wage growth in our country because we have the highest tax rate in the world for businesses that do business internationally. We thought, we need to do something about it, and so we set about reforming our Tax Code with three goals in mind.

One is to simplify the Tax Code. Everybody knows how complex it is and how much money people spend hiring an accountant or H&R Block or somebody to help them figure it out. Secondly, we figured that it would be important to give hard-working families a tax cut. So we have succeeded in reducing the tax break for every tax bracket in the Tax Code for working families. For example, for low-income families, we have a zero tax bracket now. For a joint-filing husband and wife, on the first \$24,000 they earn, there is no tax at all. And thanks to some great work by Senator RUBIO and Senator LEE, we have doubled the child tax credit. Those are good things. We have doubled the standard deduction—so fewer people have to itemize deductions to get the full benefit of the code—while maintaining the charitable deduction and the mortgage interest deduction and popular items like that. We have also said, for example, that a family earning roughly \$70,000 a year—the median income in America for a family of four—would see a benefit of roughly \$2,200 less tax liability.

I would think those would be good things that our friends across the aisle would want to work with us on. How do we simplify the code? How do we let people keep more of what they earn, more take-home pay, a better standard of living? How do we make America's

economy more competitive since we have the highest tax rate in the world and we are seeing investment in businesses flee to other lower tax jurisdictions? You would think those would be the sorts of things on which our friends across the aisle would want to work with us but apparently not. Instead, what we get are these sort of reckless and really buffoonish allegations that cause the speaker to lose all credibility in any sort of debate we might be having.

Unfortunately, the media tends to pick up on some of this rhetoric and jump on the bandwagon, but the media's worst claims are at least a little closer to Earth than what I recounted earlier. For example, the Washington Post said the tax reform “took place behind closed doors.” Well, that is a tired old rhetoric and talking point. You would think the Washington Post could come up with something a little better than that and actually something that is a little more accurate than that. One columnist at the New York Times sighs that the package benefits donors at the expense of voters—what does that mean?—and that it “only modestly addresses the central socioeconomic challenge of our time.” Well, I wonder what this reporter or columnist for the New York Times thinks is the central socioeconomic challenge of our time. I think one of those is for people to be able to pursue the American dream, to be able to find work, to be paid a decent wage, and to be able to keep more of what they earn, but that apparently isn't good enough for this columnist at the New York Times.

Certainly, these charges deserve a little more attention than the minority leader's asteroid attack, but they, too, are misguided.

When it comes to tax reform, the drafting process did not take place behind closed doors. I wonder why the Washington Post was so ill-informed and ignorant of the legislative process that they didn't see the 70 Senate hearings we have had on tax reform since 2011. They apparently didn't bother to turn on C-SPAN to see the debate and the amendment process in the Senate Finance Committee that produced the Senate bill, and they apparently are not paying much attention to what we are talking about here on the Senate floor as we are trying to reconcile the differences between the House bill and the Senate bill. So I guess they are just not paying much attention, which I thought newspapers and reporters were supposed to do.

The second major allegation—that we are ignoring working Americans and the middle class—is demonstrably false.

Many are wondering why tax cuts for families are temporary and the ones for corporations are permanent. Well, we know that businesses need long-term assurances about the tax environment so that they will invest and make plans. We wanted to make tax cuts for

individuals permanent, too, but that requires 60 votes in the Senate, and every single one of our Democratic colleagues voted against the bill and they refused to participate in the process. So with only 52 votes to work with, we were unable to meet that 60-vote threshold. So on the one hand, they criticize us for not making those tax cuts for individuals permanent, but then they deny us the votes we need in order to make that happen. It is not that we don't want to make these tax cuts permanent for the middle class; it is that the Democrats are preventing us from doing so.

I agree with my friend and colleague, the junior Senator from Florida, Mr. RUBIO, who has said that when it comes to debating tax reform, Republicans can't be the country club party. I certainly agree that is not who we are, but that is also not who we should be helping in this bill. We ought to be addressing low-income and middle-class Americans first.

Yes, we do lower the corporate rate, but historically that has been something Democrats have called for. I remember that in 2011, President Obama, in a joint session of Congress, called for reducing the highest corporate tax rate in the world, and he called upon Republicans and Democrats to work together to make that happen. And we have had others, like the ranking member on the Senate Finance Committee, the Senator from Oregon, Mr. WYDEN, who cosponsored a bill that would have reduced the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 24 percent. We do a little better than that in this bill. We take it down to 20 percent, which is close to the industrialized world average on tax rates, but the Senator from New York, the Democratic leader, has also called for lowering the corporate tax rate and making us more competitive in the global economy. Do you know what will happen when we do that? We will see investment come back to the United States, along with the jobs that go along with it. Who will benefit from that? Will the businesses that create those jobs benefit? I suppose they will, but the people who will really benefit will be the people who perform those jobs and who earn those wages: hard-working American families.

A group of nearly 140 economists say that, on balance, they believe the bill will enhance economic efficiency and result in most households enjoying lower marginal rates. That is economics talk for tax cuts. But what about fairness and simplification? Don't we all want a fairer tax code and one that is easier to navigate? I believe, once again, our bill delivers.

Those economists I mentioned say fairness would be served by reduction differences, and the tax treatment of individuals with similar incomes and simplification would be served by reducing the number of individuals who itemize for Federal tax purposes. That is exactly what we do by doubling the standard deduction.

Right now, about 3 out of 10 individual taxpayers itemize. Under our doubling the standard deduction, only 1 out of 10 will find it necessary to itemize.

The simple truth is, the Senate bill will lower tax bills on millions of working-class Americans. It will lower taxes, not raise them, on the working class. Again, by nearly doubling the standard deduction and lowering rates across the board and doubling the child tax credit, the Senate tax reform plan will lower taxes for every income group. The Senate tax plan was written with working families in mind, and the legislation reflects that goal.

As I said earlier, and I will say it again, a family of four earning a median income of about \$70,000 will see a \$2,200 savings in their tax bill each year. It may be easy for folks living in the rarified air in Washington, DC, to shrug that off and say \$2,200 is no big deal to me, but to the people I represent, \$2,200 in tax savings a year is a big deal. It can mean the difference between being able to save for retirement, help pay for a college education, or maybe take a vacation for the first time in a long time. That is the money they have earned, and we are simply saying you can keep more of it under this bill.

Finally, I want to mention the Federal deficit. Will the tax bill increase it? Well, yesterday the Office of Tax Policy at the Treasury Department released an analysis of expected tax revenue associated with the administration's economic growth initiatives. Among the key findings is, \$1.8 trillion of additional revenue would be generated over 10 years based on expected economic growth. The Congressional Budget Office uses the baseline of 1.9-percent economic growth. That is because, during the entire Obama Presidency, the U.S. Government and economy experienced an unprecedented low rate of economic growth since the Great Recession of 2008, but, historically, dating back to World War II, we have seen the economy grow at 3.2 percent. So why should we settle for 1.9 percent or 2 percent? We shouldn't.

Our friends on the other side have suddenly become deficit hawks after seeing the national debt double during the Obama administration. Let's not forget, they supported lowering these same corporate tax rates year after year and embraced other parts of our plan which we have incorporated. That is why their attacks, their histrionics, their screams of Armageddon are laughable, and, frankly, they insult the intelligence of Americans who are trying to figure this out. It is hard to figure out what is actually happening when you have somebody crying like Chicken Little that the sky is falling. It is hard for people to sort all of this out.

Well, as we continue to work on a conference committee report to reconcile the differences between the House and the Senate versions of the

bill, our focus will be on those hard-working American families I mentioned earlier—people of modest income, people of average income.

Yes, we are going to make our businesses more competitive globally because that will benefit the same families we are trying to benefit by the individual tax cuts.

You can see why I perhaps was a little reluctant to come address some of these histrionics and outlandish and unbelievable claims, but I have also learned that if you don't respond—if you don't counter falsehood with truth—some people are simply going to believe the falsehood, so I thought it was important to do so. Let's remain clear-eyed, and let's get this work done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I come to the floor to talk about the Children's Health Insurance Program and Community Health Centers, but I do want to take a moment to respond to my friend and colleague, the distinguished Senator on the Republican side.

I can speak for myself and others, I know, on this side who very much want to see tax reform, very much want to close loopholes that take jobs overseas and support small businesses, but what is in front of us and what was voted on was a bill that, when fully implemented, would raise taxes on something like 87 million middle-class Americans. That doesn't make any sense at all.

All of the rosy estimates on economic growth were not backed up in legislative language. As to the \$4,000 wage increase that had been talked about as a minimum for people across the country to receive based on economic growth, I suggested we write that into law; that if, in fact, folks don't get their \$4,000, the tax breaks would stop—and folks aren't willing to do that.

I want to make sure folks in Michigan get their \$4,000 wage increase, and we don't get another bunch of promises with trickle-down economics, where everything goes to the top 1 percent, and folks in Michigan are still waiting for it to trickle down.

CHIP AND COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

Mr. President, let me go to the subject I am here to talk about; that is, the fact that we are now on day 73 since the Children's Health Insurance Program and community health center funding has stopped. The Federal funding stopped on September 30.

I am very concerned. I was reading today that the House leadership has essentially been saying they don't want to see this continued as part of a year-end package in 2 weeks. My assumption was, we were going to see the Children's Health Insurance Program and community health centers wrapped into the bill in a couple of weeks that would set the priorities for our country.

If it is true what was reported, there ought to be an alarm going out all across the country. The Children's Health Insurance Program—which we call MICHild in Michigan—covers 9 million children across the country. These are working families. These are working families who need some help to have insurance for their children—children who now go to the doctor instead of an emergency room. This actually saves dollars by children being able to have a regular relationship with a doctor, parents knowing they can take their children to the doctor instead of having to figure out how to address their concerns in the middle of the night in the emergency room.

So 9 million children right now are at risk because of inaction. It has been 73 days. I am very concerned that as soon as February, the MICHild Program will be running out of funding. In fact, this month, there are three States that are losing funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program: Arizona, with over 88,000 children who receive health insurance and are able to go to the doctor. Their moms and dads know that at least the kids are going to be able to see the doctor for their juvenile diabetes, their asthma, or simple things like a cold, flu, or serious things like cancer.

New Hampshire has 17,000—almost 18,000 children. In Oregon, 140,000 children right now receive their healthcare through the Children's Health Insurance Program. Starting in January, if there is no action, we will see millions of children losing their health insurance: California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, and Virginia. Each month, we will see funding that will be eliminated. In total, we are talking about 9 million children.

This has been a bipartisan program. This came out of committee on a bipartisan vote in September with Senator HATCH and Senator WYDEN. I was pleased to join them in putting together a 5-year extension. It came out of committee with strong bipartisan support and only one “no” vote.

I assumed it was going to be brought up on the floor before September 30 and passed. Yet 73 days later, children and families across the country are still waiting.

The other piece of healthcare that has been so critical to families—to children and individuals across our country—is funding for community health centers, which, by the way, also has strong bipartisan support. Senator ROY BLUNT and I have put in legislation with Republicans and Democrats cosponsoring it. We have a letter that 70 different Members signed to our leadership saying they support extending community health center funding. Yet, again, there has been no action for 73 days.

Our assumption had been that the Children's Health Insurance Program would come to the floor, we would amend it to add health centers, and get

it done before September 30. It has not happened. The community health centers serve 25 million patients in every part of our country. So 300,000 veterans rely on community health centers, and 7.5 million children, as well, rely on community health centers. I should add, we have 260 sites all across Michigan serving 681,000 people. Again, almost 13,000 Michigan veterans use our community health centers.

We have bipartisan support to continue funding, but the funding ended September 30. So what happens? Well, starting in January, Michigan's community health centers will lose \$12.8 million in funding because about 70 percent of the funding for health centers comes through the legislation we are now offering with bipartisan support. About 20,000 people will lose their healthcare. By June, Michigan's health centers will lose over \$80 million in funding, and almost 100,000 patients will lose healthcare. This is critically important as well. We are talking about 25 million people across the country.

Community health centers and the Children's Health Insurance Program is something we have come together on, on a bipartisan basis, over the years. There has to be a sense of urgency about this. We cannot leave at Christmas—we can't leave for the holidays without having a guarantee that children and families and individuals across our country will be able to have the health insurance and the medical care they have been receiving.

The best Christmas present—the best New Year's present we could give families—is to guarantee that moms and dads can take their kids to the doctor, if we have the Children's Health Insurance Program, and that people young and old across the country who use community health centers will still know they can count on them.

Let me close by just sharing a story from John, who is one of the more than 12,700 veterans served by Michigan's community health centers.

John had always been healthy. He didn't have health insurance. In fact, the last time he had seen a doctor was when he was still in the service back in 1975.

Last summer, he started having symptoms. He tried to ignore them, but his wife knew something was wrong. They tried to get help but faced long waits for him to be seen. That is when they contacted the Traverse Health Clinic.

The clinic was able to get John in right away, and his wife's fears were confirmed. He was diagnosed with congestive heart failure.

The team at Traverse Health Clinic helped get John admitted to the hospital, coordinated services with the cardiologist, and got him signed up for health coverage. That is what community health centers do—connect people with the services they need to be treated or provide preventive care so that they can stay healthy.

In John's case, he says it changed his life. John said this:

There are a lot of people like me who were doing fine and now they're not. There are a lot of people like me who need a place like Traverse Health Clinic. I consider myself extremely fortunate. Now I have a doctor. I'm so thankful.

On behalf of the 25 million people who use community health centers and the 9 million children covered by the Children's Health Insurance Program, it is time that we act. They have been waiting for 73 days. We could do this in a few hours, in a day, on the Senate floor. I urge us to get this done.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. SASSE. Mr. President, I rise today in continued support of Steve Grasz's nomination to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

Some of those who have been attacking Mr. Grasz have claimed that he doesn't have the character or the temperament to treat litigants fairly and decide cases based on the facts and the law.

In evaluating those claims, I hope my colleagues in this body will listen to the hundreds of Nebraskans of all partisan and ideological stripes who have stood up in support of Steve's nomination. I urge everyone to listen to what those Nebraskans have to say specifically about his character and about his temperament.

One Nebraskan wrote to Mrs. FISCHER, the senior Senator from Nebraska, and to me, as well as to the Judiciary Committee:

I was the plaintiff in a First Amendment defamation and political speech action against the Nebraska Republican Party. . . . Mr. Grasz represented the Nebraska Republican Party. I was not successful in my lawsuit. However, I did have the opportunity to meet and interact with Mr. Grasz during the case and found him to be . . . a consummate professional. Based on my observations I believe his judicial temperament would be of the highest quality and all parties would be given equal opportunity. . . . I can think of no one better qualified or suited to be appointed to this prestigious judgeship than Steven Grasz.

Another Nebraskan wrote to us:

I know Steve personally having served as opposing counsel to him on cases. . . . Steve was a formidable opponent. . . . While he zealously advocated for his clients, he did so in a level-headed and even-keeled manner.

Yet another Nebraskan writes:

I . . . have . . . represented clients in cases where Mr. Grasz was opposing counsel. In all circumstances he demonstrates the utmost professionalism. . . . I am a registered Democrat and, quite frankly, am not a strong supporter of the current administration. However, as a practicing attorney dealing with complex litigation and appearing regularly in the federal courts of appeals, I want intelligent, thoughtful individuals appointed to the Bench who will administer the law and apply existing precedent. I have no doubt that Mr. Grasz can do that very effectively.

Also, consider the words of this Nebraskan:

Steve does not allow his role as an advocate to cloud his analyses and judgment. He

reviews statutes, regulations, rule and common law with a clear eye, and he applies these authorities to the facts presented to him. . . . [H]is respect for precedent and his high regard for the works of other branches of government show his dedication to following the Constitution and our nation's laws as they are written.

Steve Grasz is a Nebraskan through and through. As I said here on the floor yesterday, Steve bleeds Husker red, but he is a guy who is well suited to take on the black robes of the judge, for he understands that we do not have blue or red partisan jerseys on our article III branch of government, the independent judiciary.

Steve is well suited to serve as a judge on the Eighth Circuit. I think that not just Nebraskans but folks across all the States represented in the Eighth Circuit are going to find a man of unbelievable temperament.

The ABA is a liberal advocacy organization. That is absolutely their right. What is not OK is for the ABA to masquerade as a neutral arbiter of professional qualifications.

Attacks on Steve's character have come out of this process because the two reviewers from the ABA cite again and again and again anonymous sources of his supposed rudeness. We have seen none of that in Nebraska. Again, hundreds of people have written to the senior Senator and to me and now to the Judiciary Committee in support of the President's decision to nominate Steve Grasz to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the specific letters I have just cited.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

MOATS LAW FIRM, P.C., L.L.O.,

Elkhorn, NE, September 21, 2017.

Re Nomination of Steven Grasz for 8th Circuit Appellate Judgeship.

Chairman CHUCK GRASSLEY,
Senate Judiciary Committee,
Washington, DC.

Ranking Member DIANNE FEINSTEIN,
Senate Judiciary Committee,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATORS GRASSLEY AND FEINSTEIN: Steven Grasz has been nominated as an appellate judge for the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. I write this letter of recommendation in support of his nomination and confirmation. I am a lifelong member of the Democratic party.

I have known Mr. Grasz since 2009 when we were involved in common litigation to the Nebraska Supreme Court (*Moats v. Republican Party of Nebraska*, 281 Neb. 411, 796 N.W.2d 584 (2011)) which was subsequently appealed to the United States Supreme Court where certiorari was denied. I was the plaintiff in a First Amendment defamation and political speech action against the Nebraska Republican Party arising out of a non-partisan office I sought in the Nebraska Unicameral in the fall of 2008. Mr. Grasz represented the Nebraska Republican Party.

I was not successful in my lawsuit. However I did have the opportunity to meet and interact with Mr. Grasz during the case and found him to be polite and courteous and extremely well informed and educated on this complicated subject matter. At no time did

he ever show any inappropriate actions or behavior towards me or my family and was a consummate professional. Based on my observations I believe his judicial temperament would be of the highest quality and all parties would be given equal opportunity.

In life there is always another chapter to each of our collective stories. I am pleased to inform you, that my dealings with Mr. Grasz and his family extended beyond the case we were involved in. Our children were involved in competitive dance for the past four years and my wife and our children had the opportunity to interact with Mr. Grasz and his family in a social setting. My observations and interactions with him were always positive and productive notwithstanding him having been on opposite side of a very emotional case. He is a terrific husband and father, a brilliant legal scholar and oaring human being. I can think of no one better qualified or suited to be appointed to this prestigious judgeship than Steven Grasz.

Sincerely,

REX J. MOATS.

SEPTEMBER 18, 2017.

Re Nomination of L. Steven Grasz.

Chairman CHUCK GRASSLEY,
Senate Judiciary Committee, Washington, DC.
Ranking Member DIANNE FEINSTEIN,
Senate Judiciary Committee, Washington, DC.

CHAIRMAN GRASSLEY AND RANKING MEMBER FEINSTEIN: I write in support of the nomination of Steve Grasz to the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. I know Steve personally having served as opposing counsel to him on cases. I also know him by reputation in the Omaha legal community through his work on significant litigation.

Steve was a formidable opponent. He was willing to go the extra step to advance his clients' interests. While he zealously advocated for his clients, he did so in a level-headed and even-keeled manner. I've never seen him raise his voice. He listens and asks good questions. His temperament is well suited for the position to which he has been nominated.

There is no question Steve has the intellect to do the important work of a federal appellate court judge. He has published multiple law review articles which have contributed to the practice of law. Steve's pleadings and briefs are clear, thoughtful, and well written. He did not attempt to advance frivolous claims. In my experience with him, he works diligently and was always well prepared.

Unfortunately, with some lawyers, every conversation has to be memorialized in a letter out of fear that the lawyer will reverse course. That was not the case with Steve. His word was good.

Steve has both represented the government and represented individuals in claims against the government. He has valuable litigation experience in cases involving Section 1983 claims and qualified immunity which make up a significant portion of the cases handled by federal appellate judges. His experience will serve him well while sitting on the other side of the bench.

I believe Steve is committed to upholding the laws and Constitution of the United States, and will do so as a member of the Eighth Circuit. I urge the Judiciary Committee to advance his nomination.

Respectfully Submitted,

TIMOTHY J. THALKEN.

SEPTEMBER 9, 2017.

Re Confirmation Hearing for L. Steven Grasz for Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

Chairman CHUCK GRASSLEY,
Senate Judiciary Committee, Washington, DC.
Ranking Member DIANNE FEINSTEIN,
Senate Judiciary Committee, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR GRASSLEY AND SENATOR FEINSTEIN: I am writing to express my support for Steven (Steve) Grasz to be confirmed as judge for the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. I have been a lawyer for twenty-one years, and had the good fortune to spend five of those years working with Steve on a variety of matters spanning from local litigation to federal regulatory and administrative actions. While Steve ably represented clients in state and federal venues, I observed firsthand the qualities that would make him an outstanding federal appellate court judge.

Steve possesses admirable analytical skills an ability to grasp complex and often highly abstract concepts in a manner that allows to communicate these concepts in a plain, understandable way. From a practical perspective, this is very important skill for any judge to possess because it is the vanishingly rare lawsuit in which the underlying dispute is so very narrow that the judge's ruling is limited only to the parties before the Court. Instead, judges' resolutions of disputes serve as guidelines for many other lawyers and their respective clients to follow in future transactions. This is especially true for Circuit-level opinions, which are widely disseminated. Well-reasoned, cogent judicial opinions are an invaluable resource for lawyers to turn to when advising Clients who may or may not be overly familiar with our justice system. Lawyers rely upon judicial opinions when advising clients about the relative risks and benefits of a particular course of action. Steve's ability to communicate difficult, often abstract concepts in plain terms will contribute greatly to this very important function of our legal system.

Importantly, Steve does not allow his role as advocate to cloud his analyses and judgment. He reviews statutes, regulations rule and common law with a clear eye, and applies these authorities to the facts presented to him. Steve advises clients and develops strategies based upon existing authorities, showing his respect for our system of governance and for each branch's contribution to it. His ability and willingness to evaluate particular facts in light of various authorities is a critical skill for judges to possess, and shows his deep respect, for precedential law. Similarly, his respect for precedent and his regard for the works of other branches of government show his dedication to following the Constitution and our nation's laws as they are written. This quality is critically important for a judge to have following the Constitution and our nation's laws as they are written is part and parcel of the development and application of clear, lasting legal principles upon which all members of the public—not only lawyers and their clients—may rely in conducting the transactions of everyday life.

Finally, Steve has a temperament very well-suited in the bench. He is levelheaded and unfailingly courteous to opposing lawyers their respective clients, and to judges. I have seen Steve involved in challenging, stressful situations, yet his demeanor consistently remains composed and polite. He does not engage in personal criticism of judges, fellow lawyers, or litigants, nor does he allow the behavior of others to be anything other than courteous and professional. While certainly not every lawyer possesses this ability, it is a vital one for judges to

have because our system of justice depends upon judges' ability to maintain decorum even when attorneys or litigants are not doing so. Through trying situations, Steve has consistently shown his ability and willingness to treat all attorneys and parties with respect, and he has conducted himself in the professional, composed manner that lawyers hope to see in judges at every level. His treatment of others ultimately honors the truth-seeking function our system of justice is intended to fulfill since he does not engage in obstructionist tactics or gamesmanship intended to drive up litigation costs or designed to deny other parties access to information bearing upon matter in dispute. As a lawyer, Steve sets an excellent example of someone working toward fair and just resolutions of disputes. This attribute would serve him very well as a judge and would directly benefit all persons impacted by the court's decisions.

Thank you for taking the time to review my letter of support for Steve. If you have any questions or concerns about my standpoint regarding his ample qualifications for being confirmed as judge for the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, please let me know.

Sincerely,

TIM DOLAN.

OMAHA, NE,

September 20, 2017.

Re Nomination of Steve Grasz, United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

Hon. CHUCK GRASSLEY,
U.S. Senator,
Senate Judiciary Committee, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR GRASSLEY: I am writing to indicate my strong support for President Trump's nomination of Steve Grasz to the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

Mr. Grasz was employed by the Kutak Rock law firm when I began working there right after law school. Mr. Grasz is very intelligent and has the legal background and skill to be an asset to the Court of Appeals. I have maintained my acquaintance with Mr. Grasz and have also represented clients in cases where Mr. Grasz was opposing counsel. In all circumstances he demonstrates the utmost professionalism.

I have no hesitation in stating that litigants could present to him the most complex legal issues and he would be able to analyze them intelligently and coherently. I have also had the opportunity to read materials he has written. Opinions by him would be a credit to the judiciary.

Although I personally believe that an individual's personal political, social, or religious practices and beliefs are irrelevant to qualifications for a judicial position, I realize that such considerations have been injected into judicial confirmation proceedings over the past few years. I expect that certain factions may attempt to raise such issues regarding Mr. Grasz who has actively served both his government and his community.

I am a registered Democrat and, quite frankly, am not a strong supporter of the current administration. However, as a practicing attorney dealing with complex litigation and appearing regularly in the federal courts of appeals, I want intelligent, thoughtful individuals appointed to the Bench who will administer the law and apply existing precedent. I have no doubt Mr. Grasz can do that very effectively.

I appreciate your consideration of my recommendation. If there is any interest in further information, please feel free to have your staff contact me.

Sincerely,

DIANA J. VOGT,
For the Firm.

Mr. SASSE. I urge all of my colleagues to listen to all of the Nebraskans, again, of all backgrounds and across the partisan spectrum, as they have urged us to confirm Mr. Grasiz today.

Thank you.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII that at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, December 12, there be 30 minutes of postcloture time remaining on the Grasiz nomination, equally divided between the leaders or their designees, and that following the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate vote on the confirmation of the Grasiz nomination and that, if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR 5-YEAR
OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS PLAN

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, there are all kinds of reports swirling around Washington, and we are hearing from those reports that the Trump administration is about to give a huge, early Christmas present to the oil industry. The reports are, the Department of the Interior is preparing to unveil a new 5-year plan for offshore oil and gas drilling—one that would open up the entire Atlantic coast of the United States to drilling. This new 5-year plan, which would go into effect in 2019, would replace the current 5-year plan that was finalized just last year and doesn't expire until 2022.

Why is the Department of the Interior in such a rush to waste taxpayers' money to write a new one? The answer is, the oil industry wants to start drilling in these areas now, and the Trump administration is going to let them do it. While it hasn't been released yet, we are hearing that the administration's new plan will open up the entire Atlantic coast to offshore drilling—from Maine to as far south as Cape Canaveral. Let me show you why that is a problem.

This is the east coast of the United States. This is Maine. This is Florida. This is Cape Canaveral. This is Fort Pierce, FL. Look what happens on the Atlantic coast off the eastern continental United States. These are all military testing areas. Every one of these hatched areas—every one of these blocks—is of a place that has limited access because of military testing.

Take, for example, all of this area off the east coast of Florida. There is a place called the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. There is a place called the Kennedy Space Center. We are launching commercial and military rockets, and within another year and a half, we will be launching American rockets with American astronauts that will go, just like the space shuttle before them, to and from the International Space Station and will carry crews as well as the cargo they already carry.

When you are launching to the International Space Station or, in 2 years, when we launch the largest rocket ever from the Kennedy Space Center—the forerunner to the Mars Program, taking humans to Mars, or in the case of the new Mars rocket, called the SLS, the Space Launch System—where do you think it will drop its solid rocket boosters? It will drop them precisely out here, which is exactly why you cannot have oil rigs out here.

All of the commercial rockets that come out of Cape Canaveral right now put up a host of communications satellites; that is, a constellation of satellites. How do you think we get our pinpoint GPS here on Earth? Many of those rockets are coming right out of the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, and, increasingly, there is commercial activity at the Kennedy Space Center, which is collocated with the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.

What about all of those scientific satellites that are out there that give us precise measurements on what is happening to the climate so when we then track hurricanes, we know precisely and have such great success in predicting the path and the voracity of a hurricane? All of those rockets are coming out of Cape Canaveral. They have first stages, and when the first stages burn up, they have to fall somewhere. You cannot have oil and gas production out here.

It would be the same off of Norfolk, VA. They also have a launching point there for NASA—Wallops Island. Yet, in the Norfolk area, all of the military does its training out in the Atlantic, and you are going to have a whole disruption.

Take, for example, all of the military assets—spy satellites—that go into orbit and are rocketed out of Cape Canaveral. Those first stages, when burned up, have to fall. That is why we have a location like the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. It launches from west to east in order to get that extra boost of the Earth's rotation and, therefore, needs less fuel to get into orbit.

This is a prime location. You cannot put oil and gas out here. You cannot have oil rigs off of Cape Canaveral, where all of these military, NASA, and commercial rockets are going, as well as governmental payloads that are not military.

We have heard the loud opposition from the Department of Defense, the chambers of commerce, fishermen, and coastal communities all along the Atlantic that have weighed in against the administration's plan to allow drilling off their coasts.

We thought we had put this puppy to bed last year when the Obama administration backed off its plans to have these drilling areas. They backed off because of the opposition. They also backed off when it came to Florida. Why? Florida has more beaches than any other State. We don't have as much coastline. Alaska has the greatest coastline, but the last time I checked, Alaska didn't have a lot of beaches. The one that is blessed with the beautiful beaches is Florida. When it comes to beaches, that means people want to go to the beach, and that means there is a significant tourism-driven economy there. We learned what happened with just the threat of there being oil on the beach. Remember the Deepwater Horizon oil explosion off of Louisiana? Let me show you so you don't get confused with all of these colors.

In essence, all of this yellow over on the other side of Florida, in the Gulf of Mexico, means this area is off-limits. It is in law, and it is a good thing because when the Deepwater Horizon spilled off of Louisiana, the winds shifted, and that oil started drifting to the east. It got as far as Pensacola Beach, and it completely blackened the white, sugary sands. That photograph went all over the world. Pensacola Beach was covered up in oil, and the winds kept carrying it forward. Some of it got into Choctawhatchee Bay and the sands of Destin, and some of the tar balls went as far east as the Panama City Beach. Then the winds shifted and carried it back, and that was the extent of the oil on the beach.

For 1 solid year—a tourist year—the tourists did not come to the west coast of Florida because they had seen the pictures of what had happened to Pensacola Beach, all of the way down the west coast—the Tampa Bay area, Sarasota, the Fort Myers area, Naples, Marco Island. The tourists did not come.

Now let's go back to the Atlantic. When you start to do this, you are now threatening the lifeblood of Florida's economy, its tourism-driven economy. It is not only a threat to the environment, but it is a threat to the multibillion-dollar, tourism-driven economy.

In 2010, we lost an entire season, as the tourists did not come to the west coast of Florida. That is why, when I gave the list of all of those entities, including the U.S. Department of Defense, they don't want it. It is because

of the military areas. I also mentioned the chambers of commerce. They have awakened to the fact that oil on beaches is a killer of our economy. When this plan is announced later today, probably, it will not be unusual to see local governments spring into action, like the Broward County Board of Commissioners, which has already sent letters that oppose drilling off of Florida's coast.

Floridians understand this issue. That is why, in the past, we have had such bipartisan agreement all over Florida—Republicans and Democrats alike—to keep drilling off of our coast, but if Big Oil gets its way, every inch of the Continental Shelf is going to be drilled. We saw what happened less than a decade ago. The scientists would say we are still uncovering, for example, the full extent of that BP oilspill and its damage.

I urge our colleagues to take up the bill that was filed earlier this year by this Senator, Senator MARKEY, and others that would block an attempt by the administration to open up our coast to oil drilling.

The stakes are extremely high for the economy of our States all along the eastern coast. Georgia has a substantial tourism-driven economy. You know South Carolina has Myrtle Beach. What about North Carolina? What about Virginia's tourism-driven economy and especially with all of the military concentration there? You can go right on up the coast. The stakes are exceptionally high. We simply can't risk it.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:29 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate from Vermont.

FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT AND THE REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, as everybody knows, the Republican Party now controls the U.S. House, the U.S. Senate, and the White House. We also know that unless a budget agreement is reached by December 22, the U.S. Government will shut down, which will cause serious harm to our country, including the men and women in the Armed Forces and our veterans.

I do not know why the Republican Party, which controls all the branches of government, wants to shut down our government. I think that is wrong, and I think a shutdown will be very hurtful to people from coast to coast.

Earlier this year, President Trump tweeted: "Our country needs a good

shutdown." I strongly disagree. I don't think we need a good shutdown; I think we need to reach an agreement on a budget that works for the middle class of our country and not just the wealthiest people.

It is no great secret that we are living in a nation that has almost unprecedented income and wealth inequality, at least since the 1920s. We have the top one-tenth of 1 percent owning almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent.

I don't believe that now is the time to give massive tax breaks to the wealthiest people in this country in a horrific tax bill and then at the end of 10 years raise taxes on 83 million middle-class families. I think that makes no sense. I don't think it makes much sense to be passing a tax bill that gives 62 percent of the benefits to the top 1 percent.

Apparently it is not good enough for my Republican colleagues that corporate America today is enjoying record-breaking profits and that the CEOs of large corporations are earning more than 300 times what their employees make. What the tax bill would do is give over \$1 trillion in tax breaks to large, profitable corporations at a time when already one out of five of these major corporations is paying nothing in taxes. That is apparently not good enough—we need to lower taxes for large corporations even more.

Right now as we speak, legislation is being written behind closed doors by the House Freedom Caucus and other Members of the extreme rightwing to provide a massive increase in funding for the Pentagon for the rest of the fiscal year, while only providing temporary and inadequate funding for the needs of the working families of this country, including education, affordable housing, nutrition, environmental protection, and other vital programs.

What we have seen over the last year is a Republican effort to throw 30 million people off of health insurance. What we then see is a Republican effort to give \$1 trillion in tax breaks to the top 1 percent and large corporations and at the end of 10 years raise taxes on middle-class families. Now what we are seeing on the part of the Republican Party is an effort to increase military spending by \$54 billion while ignoring the needs of a struggling middle class. We have to get our priorities right and maybe—just maybe—we have to start listening to what the American people want, not just what wealthy campaign contributors want.

In terms of the Republican so-called healthcare bill, the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, there is massive opposition from the American people. In terms of this tax bill, in case you haven't seen the last few polls, there is massive opposition to a tax bill that gives incredible tax breaks to people who don't need it and raises taxes on the middle class. Maybe—just maybe—we should start paying attention to the needs of working families.

For a start, let us be clear that since the passage of the Budget Control Act of 2011, Democrats and Republicans have agreed to operate with parity, which means if you are going to increase military spending, you increase programs that meet the needs of working families, domestic spending. There was parity in 2011 and parity three times after, and parity must continue. It is not acceptable to be talking about a huge increase in military spending and not funding the needs of a shrinking middle class, which desperately needs help in terms of education, in terms of nutrition, and so many other areas.

Furthermore, the American people are quite clear that they want us to move toward comprehensive immigration reform. They understand that it would be a terrible, terrible, terrible thing to say to the 800,000 young people who have lived, in most cases, their entire lives in the United States of America: We are ending the DACA Program. You are going to lose your legal status. You are not going to be able to go to school. You are not going to be able to hold a job. You are not going to be able to be in the military. We are taking away the legal status that you now have, and you will be subject to deportation. That is not what the American people want. They want to continue the DACA Program, and, in fact, they want comprehensive immigration reform—and now. Now is the time to deal with that.

I am happy to say that on this issue, there are a growing number of Republicans in the House and in the Senate who understand that in America, you are not going to throw 800,000 of our brightest young people, who are serving in the military and holding important jobs, out of this country by withdrawing their legal status.

I have been deeply involved, as have Senator BLUNT and others, in the Community Health Center Program, which is so important for the people of our country. Twenty-seven million Americans today receive their healthcare through community health centers, which provide primary care, provide mental health counseling—so important today—provide dental care, and provide low-cost prescription drugs. While my Republican colleagues have been busy trying to throw 30 million people off of health insurance, while they have been busy trying to give a trillion dollars in tax breaks for the rich and for large corporations, somehow they have not had the time to extend the CHIP program or the Community Health Center Program. How in God's Name can we be talking about tax breaks for billionaires and not extending a health insurance program for the children of our country? If the CHIP program is not reauthorized, 9 million children and working families will lose their health insurance.

Let us get our priorities right. Let us immediately pass legislation extending and funding the CHIP program and the Community Health Center Program.

In the Midwest, as you well know, and all over this country, we have a major crisis in terms of pensions. So many of our older workers are scared to death about retiring because they have very little or nothing in the bank as they end their work careers. If Congress does not act soon, the earned pension benefits of more than 1.5 million workers and retirees in multiemployer pension plans could be cut by up to 60 percent. People who have worked their entire lives, people who have put money into a pension program, people who have given up wage increases in order to gain decent pensions now stand the possibility of seeing their pensions cut by up to 60 percent. How can we do that? How do you tell someone who has worked their entire life, who is looking forward to a decent retirement, that we are going to cut their pension by up to 60 percent? We cannot do that. When a worker is promised a pension benefit after a lifetime of hard work, that promise must be kept. Congress needs to act before the end of the year to make sure that no one in America in a multiemployer pension plan will see their pension cut. Yes, I also think that is more important than tax breaks for billionaires.

We need to make a downpayment on universal childcare. In my State of Vermont and all over this country, it is increasingly difficult for working families to find high-quality, affordable childcare. We must, in my view, double the funding for the Childcare and Development Block Grant to provide childcare assistance for 226,000 more children and move toward universal childcare for every kid in America. What the social sciences tell us is that there is no better investment than early childhood education. Every dollar we invest there is paid back many times over by kids doing better at school and by kids getting out, getting jobs, and becoming taxpayers.

There is another crisis in this country that has to be dealt with. Ten years ago, Congress passed the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program to support Americans who enter public service careers—teachers, nurses, firefighters, police officers, social workers, and military personnel. One of the absurdities that exists in America today is that we have tens of millions of Americans who are paying outrageous interest rates on their student debt. People who have done the right thing by trying to get the best education they could are now being punished because they went to college, went to graduate school, and are having to pay a significant part of their income back to the government in terms of their student debt. Congress must address this issue, and there is legislation to make sure that, at the very least, if you are prepared to go into public service work—if you want to be a teacher, a nurse, a firefighter, a police officer, a social worker, or want to go into the military—we will forgive your debt. That is an issue that should be dealt with before the end of the year.

We have a crisis in terms of our rural infrastructure, and I come from a rural State. In the year 2017, soon to be 2018, how does it happen that in rural communities all over America there are inadequate broadband capabilities? How do you start a small business in a small town if you don't have good-quality broadband? How do the kids do well in school if they can't gain access to the internet? This is the United States of America, and we should not be trailing countries all over the world that have better broadband access at lower costs than we do. If we want to grow rural America, if we want our kids to stay in rural America, we have to deal with the collapsing infrastructure in this country, especially in rural America.

Mr. President, I don't have to tell you—because Ohio has been hit hard, as has Vermont, New Hampshire, and all over this country—that we have a terrible, terrible epidemic in terms of opioid addiction. I am trying to deal with this issue in the State of Vermont, and I know it is severe in Ohio. We have to be adequately funding programs that focus on prevention, making sure that our young people do not get trapped into a life of addiction. We have to provide the kinds of treatment people need. We cannot ignore this. This is an epidemic that is sweeping this country. More people will die this year from opioid overdoses than died during the entire war in Vietnam. We have to adequately fund treatment and prevention for the epidemic that we are seeing in terms of opioids.

We ought to keep our promises to our veterans. We now have tens of thousands of positions at the Veterans Administration that have not been filled, and we need to make sure they are filled so that the veterans of our country, when they go into the VA, get high-quality care in a timely manner, which they are entitled to.

There was an article, I think it was in the Washington Post, a couple of weeks ago that talked about the fact that 10,000 people died in the last year, waiting for a decision on Social Security disability benefits. In other words, you have people who desperately need these benefits; they have applied for these benefits through the Social Security Administration, and they wait and they wait and they wait. Unbelievably, in the last year, 10,000 people died while they were waiting for a decision from the Social Security Administration. This has everything to do with the fact that there have been budget cuts in recent years that have been significant and have resulted in the loss of more than 10,000 employees in the Social Security Administration, the closing of 64 field offices, and reduced hours in many others. In Vermont, one field office has seen its staffing cut by 30 percent. We have to adequately fund the Social Security Administration so that our elderly and our disabled can get due process in terms of the benefits for which they have filed.

In 2016, the National Park Service recorded over 330 million visits to na-

tional parks and over \$11 billion in deferred maintenance. In other words, our national parks are very, very popular, but they are not getting the maintenance work they need. Meanwhile, the President wants to double fees for people visiting our beautiful national parks. This is an issue we must deal with.

The bottom line is that we are coming toward the end of the year, and we have a lot of work to do, but the work we do has to start reflecting the needs of the working people of this country, not just the billionaire class. We cannot give \$54 billion more to the military and ignore the needs of our children, our elderly, our sick, our poor. We have to come up with a budget proposal that works for all of us and not just wealthy campaign contributors. As a member of the Budget Committee, I expect to be very active in that process.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

HEALTHCARE

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I stand today to call for bipartisan action on several things that are really critical. One of them has become routine, since it started as a bill that Democrats and Republicans did together. That was the Children's Health Insurance Program, something that my colleague from Vermont has referenced.

In my State, we have been a good-government State. We have had a budget surplus for years, and, believe it or not, we relied on the fact that Congress would come through and do what they were supposed to do and reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program, but that didn't happen. As a result, we have a slight budget deficit—something we haven't had for years. But it really hit home when I called our budget director in the State and I said: How did this happen when we have had these surpluses?

He said: Well, we actually thought that you guys would reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program, but you didn't.

Instead, what we have seen is a tax bill that adds over a trillion dollars to the debt. Even when you take into account any economic gain from that bill, a nonpartisan group said that it would, in fact, add \$1 trillion to the debt. That is what we are doing instead of reauthorizing the Children's Health Insurance Program, which makes no sense to me.

Funding for CHIP expired more than 2 months ago, even though, as I said, it is one of the success stories out of this Congress. Both parties have come together for years to support this program that provides healthcare to millions of children across the country.

In Minnesota, these funds support coverage for more than 125,000 kids. Just last week, my State estimated that failing to reauthorize CHIP would cost us \$178 million. That is why the

deficit was at \$188 million. So the CHIP funding that our State has come to rely on through Democratic Presidents and Republican Presidents has suddenly gone away—that is why we have a deficit—while at the same time, a decision has been made by my colleagues on the other side to add over \$1 trillion to the debt. I don't know what to tell the people in my State, except that tax cuts for the wealthy appear to be a priority rather than reauthorizing this bill to help kids get their health insurance. Guess what. They don't understand that reasoning.

States like mine are running out of ways to make Federal funding last a little bit longer. Every single day that we don't act puts coverage at risk for millions of kids. Some States have already been forced to tell parents to start making other plans for their kids' healthcare. No parent should ever have to worry about whether their child will have healthcare. We must keep this strong program going. I have also heard from families with kids who get treatment at the children's hospitals and clinics of Minnesota and who count on this program for the medical care they need. That is why we must pass the bipartisan bill Senators HATCH and WYDEN have put together to extend CHIP for 5 years—so we can stop this nonsense and tell people back at home that that actually something is working here.

In 2015, the last time we renewed the program, it passed the Senate with 92 votes. We should demonstrate that same bipartisan spirit again. We should not hold these kids hostage with this bickering, and we certainly shouldn't be holding all of the States hostage either. This makes no sense. We must act before it is too late, or States like mine will not just have a deficit as a result of this, they will be forced to make difficult choices about insurance coverage for some of our most vulnerable constituents. CHIP is one part of our healthcare system that nearly everyone agrees works. We should be doing everything in our power to protect it.

In addition to CHIP, the American people want us to work together to make fixes to the Affordable Care Act. They don't want us to repeal it; we have seen that in the numbers. They want us to make some sensible changes. You can never pass a bill with that kind of breadth and reach without making some changes to it. I said on the day that it passed that it was a beginning and not an end.

I am a cosponsor of the bill Senator ALEXANDER and Senator MURRAY have put together because it is an important step forward and exactly the type of sensible, bipartisan legislation that we should pass. The bill has 11 Republican cosponsors and 11 Democratic cosponsors. Patient groups, doctor groups, and consumer groups have praised it, including the American Cancer Society, the American Diabetes Association, the Arthritis Foundation—and

those are just some of the A's. There are hundreds of national health groups who support this bill. They have Democratic members and they have Republican members. They just want to get something done.

Senators ALEXANDER and MURRAY held a series of hearings and discussions on commonsense solutions to bring down insurance costs with Senators on both sides of the aisle.

I fought for a provision in this bipartisan legislation that would help States like mine apply for and receive waivers. This was put together, by the way, in our State by a Republican legislature and a Democratic Governor. It is a plan that would bring down premium costs, a plan that made sense across the board and was broadly supported in our State. Our Federal Government should be encouraging that kind of flexibility. The waiver we are asking for is actually something we would like to see other States do. The provision we included in the Murray-Alexander bill would encourage other States to do exactly what we did; that is, apply for waivers for flexibility to bring down rates without getting penalized.

This bill would also expedite the review of waiver applications for proposals that have already been approved for other States.

This legislation also shortens the overall time period that States have to wait for the Federal Government to decide whether to approve their waivers. The last time I checked, I thought this administration was touting the fact that they like to get things done, that they want to move things faster, and that they don't like the redtape of bureaucracy. Well, here we have a bill that actually says that States shouldn't have to wait for the Federal Government to make decisions. Why can't we get it passed?

Not only does the bill improve the process for waivers—this is my favorite part because when you hear me talk about it, you might think, wow, this must be expensive. No. The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office says that the Alexander-Murray bill would actually cut the deficit by \$3.8 billion over the next 10 years because it simply gives States the flexibility to cope with the issues they are having in their own States, to adjust to their own particular circumstances, and to make it easier for people to afford healthcare, while saving money for the Federal Government. It makes no sense to delay by even 1 day the passage of this legislation, nor does it make any sense to cut all those kids off of health insurance.

Renewing the Children's Health Insurance Program and passing Murray-Alexander would be important steps forward, but we still must do more. I don't think we are going to get all my prescription drug bills passed by the end of the year, but we should. We won't, but we should. That doesn't mean I am giving up. I think the Amer-

ican people aren't giving up because they have been able to see clear-eyed what is going on because they are starting to see what is happening with the cost of their prescription drugs. The costs are skyrocketing.

I have heard from people across Minnesota who are struggling to afford the medicine they need. This is about the woman in Duluth who told me that she chose not to fill her last prescription because that one drug would cost a full 25 percent of her income. This is about the woman in St. Paul who, even with Medicare, can't afford a \$663-a-month cost for medicine that she needs. This is about a woman from Crystal, MN, who told me: "I am practically going without food to pay for my prescriptions." It is heartbreaking that this is happening in America.

Reducing the costs of prescription drugs has bipartisan support in Congress, and the President has said that he cares about this. So why can't we get this done?

I have one bill that has 33 cosponsors that lifts the ban that makes it illegal for Medicare to negotiate prices for Part D prescription drugs for 41 million American seniors. Yes, right now, it is in law that we can't negotiate for 41 million seniors. Last time I checked, I think they would have a lot of bargaining power, but right now, we can't do that.

A bill Senator MCCAIN and I have would allow Americans to bring safe, less expensive drugs from Canada.

A third bill that Republican Senator GRASSLEY and I have is to stop something called pay-for-delay, where big pharmaceutical companies actually pay off their generic competitors to keep less expensive products off the market. How can that kind of practice be any good for American consumers? Guess what. It is not. We need to put an end to this outrageous practice. This bill would save taxpayers \$2.9 billion.

Senator LEE and I have a bill that would allow temporary importation of safe drugs that have been on the market in another country for at least 10 years when there isn't healthy competition for that drug in this country. Believe me, there are plenty of areas where we don't have healthy competition, where Americans aren't getting the kinds of deals they should get.

I have a bipartisan bill with Senators GRASSLEY, LEAHY, FEINSTEIN, LEE, and several others called the CREATES Act to put a stop to other pharmaceutical company tactics—such as refusing to provide samples—that delay more affordable generic drugs from getting to consumers. According to the Congressional Budget Office, this legislation would save approximately \$3.6 billion.

People in this Chamber are talking about saving money. How are they doing it? On the backs of kids. They are talking about saving money. How are they doing it? On the backs of Americans who would like to afford premiums.

I have laid out a number of bills that actually have been scored to save money. Passing the Alexander-Murray bipartisan bill would save us money. We have the actual accounting to show it. Allowing for less expensive drugs from other countries would save money for consumers. It is pretty easy to understand. It is called capitalism. It creates competition.

For our own American drug companies—we are proud that they have developed lifesaving cures. They are important employers in our country. But if they refuse to bring down those prices and if they have a monopoly on the market, we should be bringing in competition. There are two ways to do it. One is generic, and that is making it easier to produce generic drugs, and also stopping big pharma companies from paying off generic companies—their competition—to keep their competitive products off the market. The other is simply allowing drugs from less expensive places, but safe places, like Canada. That is a bill I have put forward with Senator McCAIN, but also Senator BERNIE SANDERS and I have worked on this, as well as many others. These are commonsense ideas. Yet we cannot even move to a vote. Why? Because the pharmaceutical companies don't want us to have that vote.

So I am asking my colleagues, No. 1, let's end the year with some common sense and pass two commonsense bills to help the American people with their healthcare, and those are the children's health insurance bill and the Alexander-Murray compromise to make some fixes to the Affordable Care Act. Then, when people are home for a week over the holidays, maybe they should start talking to their constituents, as I have. Maybe they should talk to their friends and their neighbors and see what they think about what is going on with prescription drug prices. Maybe they will come back with a New Year's resolution that they are no longer going to be completely beholden to the pharmaceutical companies, that they are willing to give the American people some relief and take these companies on and create some competition for America.

I thought this was supposed to be a capitalistic system. In a capitalistic system, you do not have monopolies for certain drugs. You do not have a drug like insulin, which has been around for decades, triple, so that one elderly constituent in my State actually saves the drops at the bottom of the injectors so they can use them the next day. That is what is happening, while at the pharmaceutical companies, they are taking home big bonuses at the end of the year.

I implore my colleagues, let's get these commonsense things done so you can go home and not think, when you are sitting there at your holiday dinner, that you have basically left millions of kids without healthcare, and then on New Year's, the next week, make a resolution to do what is right

for your constituents, not for the pharmaceutical companies.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). The Senator from Rhode Island.

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to discuss the Trump administration's irresponsible plans to dismantle net neutrality.

This is a very important and timely issue for Rhode Islanders. The Federal Communications Commission's—the FCC's—efforts to repeal net neutrality protections could have a devastating impact on students, small businesses, and ordinary Rhode Islanders who cannot afford to pay higher premiums on internet traffic.

I have joined many of my Democratic colleagues in urging the FCC to abandon its reckless plan because it would radically alter the free and open internet as we know it and be an abdication of the FCC's responsibility to protect consumers.

Net neutrality does something incredibly important. It requires internet providers to treat all data equally. Net neutrality ensures a level playing field for everyone on the internet. It means free and open access to websites and information.

Over the past 20 years, the internet has become central to the lives of Rhode Islanders and, indeed, millions of Americans—practically every American. From students completing homework assignments to small businesses conducting e-commerce, or family members communicating with loved ones on the other side of the country or the world, the internet is now our primary means of communication. As such, I believe this is an issue of fundamental fairness and equality of opportunity.

This proposed repeal of net neutrality protections undermines the principles of a free and open internet and could be an unprecedented giveaway to big broadband providers, benefiting a few large corporations at the expense of their customers who use and rely on affordable access to the internet every day.

Net neutrality protections also ensure that all content is treated equally. Without these rules, large internet service providers may choose to block, throttle, or prioritize certain internet traffic. Without these protections, big internet service providers will be given the power to erect virtual toll booths for some customers and fast lanes for others. As a result, the repeal of net neutrality rules will likely be bad for consumers, businesses, students, and everyday Americans who cannot afford to pay additional premiums for internet access.

If these rules are repealed, internet providers can essentially say, if you want a quick download from a Web site, you have to pay more. They can go to businesses and ask them to pay

more for this fast service. They can't do that today. Everyone is treated equally.

This is particularly important when it comes to small businesses. As I go around Rhode Island to small businesses, as I have done these last few weeks, one of the reasons they are growing is because they are starting to take a presence on the internet. They have an internet business; they are beginning to sell across the country or across the globe. A small business in Wickford, RI, East Greenwich, RI, or Smithfield, RI, is not going to be able to pay the same premium for access that Amazon or a big corporation like Walmart can, and they will be squeezed further. The reason a lot of these small businesses are able to keep a store open in Rhode Island—or anyplace else in the country—and employ local workers is because they are starting to see a share of their profit come from the internet. They would like to see that grow, but if that diminishes, then the pressure on them to stay in business locally becomes acute.

These are real consequences, not hypothetical. If these rules are repealed and net neutrality is done away with, the consequences for businesses, communities, and individuals will be significant.

Let me make another example. Places of learning like our libraries, schools, and institutions of higher education all rely on offering internet access, which is already expensive. I did a press event at a public library, and they pay significant amounts of money so they have broadband access, and it is a mecca for everyone to come. The head librarian told me that they have people sitting on their doorsteps in the morning before they open and after they close so they can get a broadband signal from the library. Why are they doing that? You can't get a job today unless you can get online because that is where they post job offerings, that is where you have to send your resume, that is where you have to get the response back when you have a job interview. If you can't get on the internet, the chances of getting a job today are close to zero. It was a lot different 20, 30, or 40 years ago, when you could go down to the factory, fill out the form, pass it over the divider to the person in charge, and they would give you a telephone call back or you would come back in a few days and see how you were doing.

Local libraries are also the place where students across Rhode Island and the Nation gain access to the internet to do their homework, apply to college and financial aid, and explore the world around them. This is particularly the case in poorer neighborhoods. They can't afford to have computers or internet in their home. If you go to the public library in South Providence, right next to St. Michael's Church, in the afternoon, the kids are all there and are on the computers doing their homework. They can't do

that, in many cases, at home. They simply don't have the access.

We are always sitting around here talking about how we have to educate our young people and how we have to get them ready for a technologically challenging world, and then we are about to pull the rug right out from underneath them because that library will not be able to afford access to some sites that these young people need.

It is not just the young people who are using the libraries; it is also seniors who want to stay in touch with their families. There are functions that are so critical—as I mentioned before, you literally cannot apply for a job today unless you can get online. How does a person struggling, particularly in low-income, working-class neighborhoods, get online when they can't afford already expensive service, which could be more expensive if these rules are withdrawn and net neutrality is abandoned?

I heard about all of this in detail when I visited the Providence Public Library. Providence is an urban center, so there are other ways, perhaps, to compensate for access to libraries. But when you go to a rural area, those libraries are especially important. More than 83 percent of libraries report that they serve as their community's only provider of free internet and computing services in rural areas. If you need free service, the only place you can go to is the library. This is going to put another cost on them at a time when public-private support is being diminished.

We have a tax bill pending before us that is going to eviscerate charitable contributions. It is going to take away the deduction. Some of that money goes to our public libraries. If it doesn't go there, they will not have access.

I mentioned small businesses because, as I said, this is particularly critical. We have seen an improving economy, and for a lot of small businesses, that is because they are starting to have a presence on the internet. If that presence now comes with a higher price because the providers can say that if you want to get access and fast downloads, you have to pay X, once again, that X to a small mom-and-pop business could be huge. That X to an Amazon or Walmart is just a rounding error.

We know it is going to happen. It is not fair. It undercuts what we think is the heart and soul—I know it is the heart and soul of our economy in Rhode Island for small business, and it is another big benefit for the well-to-do businesses that can pay more and will pay more. This is not a direction we should be going.

Even more disturbing is that the FCC's proposed action may be based on a skewed public record. As we all know, under the Administrative Procedure Act, when a rule or change is proposed, they have to take public comments. There are credible reports that bots—

the electronic networks of computers—impersonating Americans filed hundreds of thousands of phony comments to the FCC during their net neutrality policymaking process, thus distorting the public record. Their supposedly fact-based and comment-based approach could be fictitious. It could be a product of special interests who decided to link together thousands, or maybe hundreds of thousands, of computers that randomly generated messages—or not so randomly, but deliberately generated messages.

What we have done is join our colleagues, and we have urged that the FCC abandon this proposal. As I said, I have joined many of my colleagues in asking, at least, that the FCC delay the vote on net neutrality until it can conduct a thorough investigation to ensure that it has a clear and accurate understanding of the public's view on this important topic. It is not based on a group of individuals and many electronically linked computers; it is based on the true sentiment of a broad range of the public. At least delay the proceeding until you can assure us that.

Unfortunately, that does not seem to be the case. This attempt appears to be part of a larger program the Trump administration is using to roll back regulations that protect ordinary working men and women throughout the country. The Chairman of the FCC, Ajit Pai, and the administration seem to say, very deliberately, that this is their goal. Just roll back regulations, without analysis that is appropriate, without a sensitivity to the benefits as well as the costs.

My view is that rather than trying to limit access to the internet, they should be doing things to make it easier, make it cheaper for small businesses, for libraries, for individual Americans to get on and use the internet, not to take advantage of the rule-making process to fatten the bottom line of big companies that are doing quite well already.

It is clear that the FCC should not vote this week, or ever, to repeal net neutrality protections that have benefited so many Rhode Islanders and Americans. I urge my colleagues to join me in opposition to the FCC's proposed dismantling of the net neutrality rules. It is important. It is important for our constituents. It is important for our small businesses. It is important for our future generations as they prepare for a very complicated and challenging world, and, for some of them, the only way to get access to the computer is the public library. The only access for a small business to the new marketplace on the net is being able to afford to be on the net. That is all in jeopardy today. I hope we can stop these net neutrality rule appeals, and do it immediately.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, as a U.S. Senator, one of the most important and consequential choices I make is whether or not to support a judicial nominee.

The men and women of the bench are often the final gatekeepers of our Nation's justice system—and the right kind of judge shows up to work every day to make the system work for every citizen, free from prejudice or bias.

With that principle in mind, I strongly oppose the three nominees for the circuit court whose nominations are before the U.S. Senate.

While President Trump has the right to make nominations, Members of this Senate also have the right to reject those nominations.

It is clear, based on the records of the three nominees before us, that is exactly what Members of this Senate ought to do.

Vote no.

Don't be a rubberstamp for this President's hateful agenda or his obvious disdain for the rule of law.

The first nominee this Senate should reject is Leonard Grasz, whom President Trump picked to serve on the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Mr. Grasz is a notable nominee but for all the wrong reasons.

He is notable because his peers at the American Bar Association unanimously found Mr. Grasz "not qualified"—just the third nominee in nearly 30 years to receive this distinction.

The ABA report shows his peers questioned whether Mr. Grasz could look past his "deeply-held social agenda and political loyalty to be able to judge objectively, with compassion and without bias.

These are serious red flags—and it is unconscionable for any of my colleagues to turn a blind eye to relevant information regarding Mr. Grasz's ability to do his job fairly.

I am also disturbed by the willingness of several of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to slander the nonpartisan ABA as some sort of liberal front group instead of evaluating its factual assessment.

The ABA has done this body a great service of neutral and fair evaluation over many decades, for which Members of the Senate should be grateful.

I also have grave concerns regarding Don Willett, one of two nominees for the Fifth Circuit.

Mr. Willett has been unabashed in his criticism of equal rights for women—expressing caustic views on pay equity, justice for sexual assault survivors, and age discrimination.

He has resisted equality for LGBTQ Americans and defied the key same-sex marriage ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court.

No judge who thumbs their nose at the Supreme Court is fit for a lifetime appointment.

No person who compares the right of one person to marry the person they love to a "right to marry bacon" is fit to administer justice in this country.

President Trump's other nominee for the Fifth Circuit, James Ho, has a similarly disturbing track record on LGBTQ rights.

He has also called for eliminating all restrictions on campaign finance and is

an ardent defender of giving the executive branch even more power.

I can see why President Trump would want Mr. Ho on the court, but Mr. Ho's pattern of giving more leeway to the executive branch should be deeply concerning to everyone else.

In sum, the three nominees President Trump sent to this Senate for review fall far short of the standards this Senate should demand or that this country deserves.

I want to make clear that these nominees have a completely backward and harmful record on women's constitutionally protected reproductive rights—and would seek to undermine *Roe v. Wade*.

Stacking our courtrooms with judges who will bend to the will of one President's hateful, divisive agenda is wrong—and will not be forgotten.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to take a stand. Reject President Trump's politically driven attacks on women's health and rights. Reject efforts to chip away at fundamental rights and respect for the LGBTQ community, and reject his judicial nominees who will serve only to give him the green light to expand his own power.

Vote no on circuit court nominees Leonard Graszczyk, Don Willett, and James Ho.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I rise to vote against Leonard Graszczyk's nomination to serve as a circuit judge for the Eighth Circuit. Mr. Graszczyk is one of two Trump judicial nominees who has received an "unqualified" ranking from the nonpartisan American Bar Association, ABA. I am appalled that Republicans advanced this nominee out of the Judiciary Committee and are bringing this vote to the floor.

Republicans have made it their mission to fill our judiciary with radical ideologues. The Trump administration has outsourced judicial nominations to the Federalist Society and the Heritage Foundation, and their nominees have included a nominee who believed in corporal punishment, one who questioned the constitutionality of the 14th Amendment, and one equated a woman's right to an abortion to chattel slavery. Many of these nominees are simply unfit to serve and undeserving of the prestige of receiving a lifetime appointment.

No judge nominated by the Obama administration received an "unqualified" ABA rating. When asked to clarify their rating for Mr. Graszczyk, a spokesperson for the ABA said that "[t]he evaluators and the Committee found that [Mr. Graszczyk's] temperament issues, particularly bias and lack of open-mindedness, were problematic. The evaluators found that the people interviewed believed that the nominee's bias and the lens through which he viewed his role as a judge colored his ability to judge fairly." I am disappointed that, instead of insisting on qualified nominees, my colleagues have decided to instead attack the ABA's ranking system.

I sincerely hope that many of my colleagues across the aisle will vote no against this nominee and demand more from the Trump administration.

Mr. REED. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REPUBLICAN TAX BILL

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, a number of Senators have inquired about the status of the tax legislation and, particularly, the prospect of a real conference committee. It is clear that Republicans are talking among themselves, but apparently they feel, with respect to Democrats, this is a conference in name only.

What I would like to do is spell out what we know to date and talk a bit about what would really be in the public's interest. Specifically, late last night, the public learned through the press that Republicans have made no progress—their words, not mine—with respect to the tax bill.

They said that all of the major issues were still outstanding. Then, when all of them got up and made their way through their breakfast cornflakes, we were told that, magically, everything had just been worked out—that everything was worked out and that this bill would be ready to go.

I know they have been trying to move at the speed of light. We had yet another dose of fake math yesterday when the Treasury Department reported its so-called analysis to project that this bill would generate great growth, when, in fact, it comes up \$1 trillion short. So I would like to make sure the public understands what is on offer as of right now.

My sense is, with respect to the key issue, which is the well-being of the middle class, millions and millions of middle-class people are going to get hurt by this legislation, millions of them very quickly—for example, millions are going to lose their health insurance coverage. Millions more are going to have high premiums. By 2027, half of the middle class in America will actually be paying more in taxes.

Senate Republicans seem to be talking about a variety of issues, but not one of the tax issues they are talking about involves bettering the quality of life for America's middle class. We don't hear any discussion of that. We hear plenty of discussion about multinational corporations. We hear plenty of discussion about rates. We hear discussions about pass-through businesses. But all of this is really like rearranging the chairs at the country club. Maybe one day the multinational corporations will do a little bit better; maybe the next day well-off heirs will do a little better. What I heard at my

recent town hall meetings is that the American people want to make sure that the middle class is not always getting the shaft. They want to make sure, for example, that in the tax law, the breaks for the multinational corporations aren't permanent and the breaks for the middle class aren't temporary. They want everybody to have a chance to get ahead. It is not too late to change course.

There are 17 moderate Democrats, led by our colleagues Senator MANCHIN and Senator Kaine, who have said that they are hungry for a bipartisan approach to bringing both sides together. I have introduced two comprehensive, bipartisan bills with senior conservative Republicans—close allies of MITCH MCCONNELL's. We have made it very clear that we want a bipartisan bill.

In that all of these changes are now being discussed and our fellow Americans can read about them in the press, take a look and see if you see one idea—even one—that is going to make life better for the vast majority of working Americans, the folks who work so hard day in and day out, who are walking on an economic tightrope, trying to save money and trying to educate their kids. We don't hear about one single idea—not one—that would make life better for the middle class.

We will have more to say about this tomorrow as, I gather, there may be some kind of ceremonial conference committee that is scheduled as they try to sort through all of these reports that they are getting from lobbyists on K Street because, I guess, lobbyists know lots about what the Republicans in the leadership and on the conference committee are talking about.

I want Americans to just read through all of this and look, line by line, to try to find anything that is going to make life better for the middle class, because I cannot find it. That, as much as anything, shows what is wrong with the way this legislation is being pursued.

What a difference from the way Ronald Reagan pursued tax reform. Ronald Reagan said point blank that the working person should at least get as good a deal as the investor. He said that we ought to have the same rate of taxation for workers as we have for investors. In fact, with Ronald Reagan—and I voted for his bill—the corporations, in effect, gave up some money to help the workers. Now what we are seeing is the workers getting the short end of the stick so that the multinational corporations can do even better. We will have more to say tomorrow.

I urge people to look through all of these stories and all of these press reports and see if they can find anything that involves a change to make life better for the hard-working middle class of our country.

REMEMBERING VERA KATZ

Mr. President, I also come this afternoon to talk about the passing of a vintage Oregonian and an extraordinary

woman—Vera Katz—who became Oregon's first speaker of our house of representatives in 1985. After serving three terms as speaker, Vera Katz won Portland's mayoral race in 1992. The Oregonian noted recently that she moved Portland to become a "nationally recognized destination city," with developments ranging from the Portland Streetcar to the East Bank.

I hope that all Oregonians and visitors to our city will stop by the bronze sculpture of Mayor Katz. It captures perfectly her strength and her warmth. She was an extraordinary person whom we think about today, not just because of her memorable accomplishments but because of her extraordinary spirit. It was indomitable. She could not be subdued when she took on an important cause.

I remember in 1996, when floodwaters on the Willamette River threatened to overwhelm downtown Portland, that, in the middle of this chaos, this very slight but still unbelievably powerful woman, Vera Katz, led hundreds of volunteers to mount what we came to call a sandbags-and-plywood defense against the floodwater. That was quintessential Vera Katz.

In my townhalls at home, we often speak of the "Oregon way"—just finding the best ideas, looking for solutions, not standoffs. She lived and breathed that "Oregon way" ethos every day of her life. I am going to miss her, and I am especially going to miss some moments that will never be forgotten.

When we were working in the early seventies and I had gotten involved with the elderly, back then—I think the Presiding Officer, the Senator from North Dakota, probably remembers these days—that was a time when, if a town had a lunch program for senior citizens, that was a big deal. Nobody was aware that we might have all of the services that we now have—in-home services and a variety of transportation services. Back then, if a town had a lunch program for older people, that was a big deal. Vera Katz was then in the legislature, and I had been running the legal aid office for the elderly and was codirector of the Gray Panthers. All of the senior citizens wanted to really focus on holding down the cost of medicine, and they told me one day: We are going to go to the legislature, and we are going to take all of our pill bottles and stack them up on the table and show those legislators what it is like to really be an older person in having to cut pills in half in our trying to find a way to make ends meet.

As the Presiding officer, the Senator from North Dakota, knows, I had never been involved in politics or in public service back then. All I really wanted to do was to play in the NBA. So I didn't know if you could do that. I didn't know if you could take all of the pill bottles to the legislature, so I called Vera Katz.

I said: The seniors want to come down, Representative Katz. They want

to hold up all the bottles. I really don't know what to do.

I could hear it through the phone because it just boomed out.

She said: The seniors want to bring their pill bottles to wake up the legislature?

I said: Yes, ma'am.

I could hear it through the phone when she said: Damn right. I want them to bring their pill bottles, and they are going to get a big welcome from me.

In all of those years in working with senior citizens, the very first person the seniors wanted to see was Vera Katz.

I asked them: How come we are always going to see Vera Katz?

They said: Because she always inspires us, and she always makes us laugh, and she always makes us want to get involved.

So this life force who, like my family, fled the Nazis, was an extraordinary public figure. Yes, she represented Portland, but she always stood up for all of Oregon.

In the days ahead, I will be back to the floor to talk some more about Vera Katz. She had a watermelon spitting contest with folks in rural Oregon just because she wanted to cement the bond between Portland and the rural part of the State. She was a wonderful woman. Our State grieves today as we think of her and her extraordinary contributions. In my having known her for more than 40 years, she is a role model for what public service ought to be all about.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. STRANGE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, there will now be 30 minutes of debate equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, the U.S. Senate has the opportunity today to vote on a nominee to the Eighth Circuit Court who exemplifies the qualities we all seek in a judge.

Steve Grasz from Nebraska is a nominee who has earned the respect of his peers. He believes in the rule of law. He has the education and the training. He has the experience needed to prepare him for this serious responsibility. Steve has a keen intellect and the humility that allows him to show respect toward all. He has an even and calm temperament—a judicial temperament.

Steve Grasz served as the chief deputy attorney general of Nebraska for 12 years. In that role, Mr. Grasz professionally and capably defended the laws of the State of Nebraska, authoring

nine briefs in the U.S. Supreme Court. He has earned the respect of the Nebraska legal community. Timothy Engler, president of the Nebraska State Bar Association, has stated he always found Steve "to be professional, civil, and ethical in all respects." In short, Steve is an outstanding Nebraskan and a talented legal mind.

The scores of recommendation letters we have received for Steve are a testament to his temperament, his integrity, and his character. These recommendations come from a diverse group of Nebraskans, from political officials to church pastors, business and community leaders, and Steve's friends and neighbors.

Steve has bipartisan support from those who know him best. Nebraskans from across the political spectrum have pointed to Steve's thoughtfulness, fairmindedness, high ethical standards, and brilliant abilities as a jurist. This includes former Democratic Governor and U.S. Senator Ben Nelson, who wrote that Steve "was an asset to our state and Nebraskans benefited from having such a capable and thoughtful professional in public service. Today, he is unquestionably one of the foremost appellate lawyers in the state, making him an obvious choice for this seat on our federal appeals court."

Debra Gilg, the former U.S. attorney for Nebraska and a Democrat appointed by President Obama, said:

Steve has always enjoyed a reputation for honesty, impeccable integrity, and dedication to the rule of law. He possesses an even temperament well-suited for the bench and always acts with respect to all that interact with him.

This is a nominee who should receive bipartisan support in the U.S. Senate as well.

I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to put their lockstep partisan politics aside on these nominees and join with me and my Nebraska colleague in voting to confirm this decent man of integrity to the Eighth Circuit. I urge a "yes" vote on Steve Grasz.

Mr. President, I yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all time is yielded back.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Grasz nomination?

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 313 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Alexander	Flake	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Blunt	Graham	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Rounds
Capito	Heller	Rubio
Cassidy	Hoeven	Sasse
Collins	Inhofe	Scott
Corker	Isakson	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson	Strange
Cotton	Kennedy	Sullivan
Crapo	Lankford	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Tillis
Daines	McConnell	Toomey
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	

NAYS—48

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Murray
Bennet	Harris	Nelson
Blumenthal	Hassan	Peters
Booker	Heinrich	Reed
Brown	Heitkamp	Sanders
Cantwell	Hirono	Schatz
Cardin	Kaine	Schumer
Carper	King	Shaheen
Casey	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Coons	Leahy	Tester
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Udall
Donnelly	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	McCaskill	Warner
Durbin	Menendez	Warren
Feinstein	Merkley	Whitehouse
Franken	Murphy	Wyden

NOT VOTING—2

Cochran McCain

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Don R. Willett, of Texas, to be a Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, Richard Burr, John Cornyn, Michael B. Enzi, Johnny Isakson, Chuck Grassley, Mike Crapo, Ron Johnson, Roger F. Wicker, Marco Rubio, Mike Rounds, Steve Daines, Lindsey Graham, Shelley Moore Capito, Cory Gardner, James E. Risch, Jeff Flake.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Don R. Willett, of Texas, to be a Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator

from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 314 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Alexander	Flake	Perdue
Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Blunt	Graham	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Rounds
Capito	Heller	Rubio
Cassidy	Hoeven	Sasse
Collins	Inhofe	Scott
Corker	Isakson	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson	Strange
Cotton	Kennedy	Sullivan
Crapo	Lankford	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Tillis
Daines	McConnell	Toomey
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	

NAYS—48

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Murray
Bennet	Harris	Nelson
Blumenthal	Hassan	Peters
Booker	Heinrich	Reed
Brown	Heitkamp	Sanders
Cantwell	Hirono	Schatz
Cardin	Kaine	Schumer
Carper	King	Shaheen
Casey	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Coons	Leahy	Tester
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Udall
Donnelly	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	McCaskill	Warner
Durbin	Menendez	Warren
Feinstein	Merkley	Whitehouse
Franken	Murphy	Wyden

NOT VOTING—2

Cochran McCain

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 48.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Don R. Willett, of Texas, to be a Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). The Senator from Oregon.

DACA

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I think that we are going to be joined here in a few moments by our colleague, the senior Senator from Illinois, Senator DURBIN, who, for years and years, has been leading the fight for the Dreamers—for the young people who are affected by DACA. He may be tied up for a bit, but as we begin—because we are going to be in a colloquy on some of these issues—I want to recognize his extraordinary contributions.

Nobody has been more focused and more relentless in terms of standing up for the rights of the Dreamers—the young people and the families who are caught up in DACA—than Senator DURBIN, the senior Senator from Illinois, and I want to make sure that his role is recognized at the outset.

I and Senator MERKLEY have spent a lot of time talking to these young people at home in our State, and we have

held special forums on it. I am just stunned at what wonderful young people these folks are. Inevitably, their grades are at the top of their classes. They seem to be working two jobs, and they are sending money to relatives. They are just doing everything that we associate with hard work and thrift and ingenuity and with what has made our country so unique and so special in the world.

I want to talk a little bit about what I have heard and also set the record straight with respect to DACA, because there is an awful lot of reckless talk about this legislation, and much of it just does not resemble the truth. Misinformation is being spread to discredit DACA recipients and their contributions to the country, and those innocent lives are being damaged. Right now, Dreamers face the very real and frightening threat that they may be ripped away from the only lives that they know and the only country that they have ever known, and I want to spell out why.

The Congress is now up against an artificial deadline that was created by this President in his scrambling to come up with a solution for the 11,000 DACA recipients in Oregon and the hundreds of thousands all over the country. If nothing is done in the Congress this year, we know that these young people are going to be fearful, and they are going to go into the holidays while wondering what is ahead for them and their families. I just feel so strongly that they deserve better. They shouldn't be hanging in suspended animation—wondering what is going to happen to them, living in fear. My hope is that there will be action taken this year to help these young people. I feel so strongly that the end-of-the-year wrapup legislation has to include legislation to finally allow these young people to realize their hopes and dreams in this country.

In his statement that announced the end of the DACA Program, the Attorney General said that our country must enforce our immigration laws, and he implied that the failure to enforce the laws somehow puts our country at risk of crime, violence, and terrorism. I can just say that, based on everything I have seen in Oregon, DACA recipients have not put our country at an increased risk of crime and terrorism, because, in fact, they are vital contributors to our Nation's success, including many who serve in our military.

It is just wonderful, and it is so good to see our colleague from Nevada here, who, along with Senator DURBIN, has championed the rights and interests of these young people. I know that she is going to speak shortly because she has seen the real-life consequences—the dangers—that are being inflicted on our young friends, our neighbors, and those who are so fearful about what will happen if Congress does not act before the end of the year.

This is not an abstraction for those like Mariana Medina, whose family

brought her to the United States when she was 3. She went on to graduate from Tigard High School, which is just outside my hometown of Portland. This past June, Mariana graduated from Portland State University with a bachelor's degree in political science. She speaks eloquently and powerfully about how she really wants to give back to the people of Oregon by helping the children and the families who are most in need of help. What a wonderful role model Mariana is.

The debate is just as real for Ricardo Lujan, who graduated from Southern Oregon University in the spring. Ricardo is now the legislative director for the Oregon Student Association. There, he has been a strong advocate for legislation to give Oregon Dreamers a chance to get their own higher education degrees.

Ricardo worked full time while going to school full time in order to pay for essentials. He said: I want to make sure that I am contributing to affording an apartment and a car. He said that without DACA, he would not have his bachelor of science degree today. He said that this law is a beacon of hope to young people like himself.

In Oregon, there are now an estimated 11,000 Dreamers. All of these young people have parents and brothers and sisters and friends and people who know them in the community because they always want to help and chip in. They have roots in these communities. They have well-laid plans to work hard in school, make something of their lives, and start families of their own here in our country.

It seems to me that with the groundswell of support for these Dreamers, before the end of this year, this Congress ought to be able to come up with a bipartisan, fair way to put an opportunity path forward for these young Americans. The effort from the White House, I have to say, and I regret it, to punish these young people and split families seems to run contrary to the values we hold dear as Americans.

Our government, by the way, made a promise to these young people when the government encouraged them to share their stories publicly, submit to background checks, and pay taxes. That was something the government urged these young people to do—come forward, pay taxes, submit to background checks. We want to make sure that we are in a position—and I was hopeful when I heard about that pledge—to take action based on the fact that these young people were willing to come forward and say: We want to be contributing members of our country. We want to make sure that when the government asks us to come forward, we do. And they did so.

I close with this, because I know my colleague wants to speak—perhaps on the same subject—it would be wrong to turn our backs on these exceptional young people. I know my colleague from Nevada is going to keep fighting

tooth and nail alongside so many of our colleagues.

Senator DURBIN was going to join me for a colloquy on some of these issues, and with the end of the year legislation barreling toward us, I think he was detained, but I want to thank him for his leadership. In fact, he has joined us now.

With the indulgence of my friend from Nevada, I would like to recognize my colleague from Illinois because no one in this Senate has put in the time or shown the tenacity and the years-long commitment to make this fight for justice for the Dreamers and those who are trying to work their way through the DACA Program to a better future for themselves and their communities. So I am very grateful to the Senator from Illinois.

I had mentioned in his absence that we thought at one time we would have a full-scale colloquy, and I have pretty much used up my time in terms of making some of the points about issues we have raised. With the indulgence of our friend from Nevada, I want to again thank the Senator from Illinois. We are on the cusp of being able to finally get justice to these Dreamers and those in DACA, and I want this body and people who are following this issue to know that we would not be in this position without the help and the advocacy of the senior Senator from Illinois.

I appreciate my friend from Nevada allowing us to have time for the Senator from Illinois.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Oregon, and I certainly thank my colleague from Nevada for giving me an opportunity to speak for a few minutes. I also thank my friend from Oregon for being steadfast on this subject.

It has been 16 years since we passed the DREAM Act. We have been through a lot. We made it here on the floor of the Senate. We passed it on the floor of the Senate. There was an effort at comprehensive immigration reform which included the DREAM Act. It was a glorious day when it passed with a strong bipartisan vote and then a bitter disappointment in the months that followed when it languished on the floor of the House of Representatives and never was called for a hearing or a vote on the floor. So many of these thousands of young people who would be protected under the DREAM Act didn't know what the future would hold.

President Obama stepped in and created DACA through Executive order, and with DACA protection, some 800,000 young people were given a chance to be part of America—something they always dreamed of. They went to college, got jobs, and they did important things in their lives that they had put off and frankly reached the conclusion that they would never be able to do.

One of the things that many of them did, which surprised people, was to pur-

sue their goal of being part of the U.S. military. We have an All-Volunteer military. These young people, undocumented in America, who have no legal status in our Nation, were prepared literally to give their lives for our country, the only country they have ever known. Is there any question in your mind as to their devotion to this Nation? Not in mine.

When you hear their stories, you will understand why. I have a story I want to tell you tonight. It is a story about Alan Torres.

Alan Torres was brought here as a child from Mexico. He grew up in North Dallas, TX, where he was a great student and athlete. In high school, he was placed in a program for advanced math and science. He took advanced placement courses in a variety of subjects which I dutifully avoided in high school, subjects such as physics, chemistry, anatomy, and physiology. He was captain of the high school varsity cross country team, where he won the district championship. He was the company commander in his high school's Junior ROTC. Not only was Alan an academic overachiever, he was also an artist on top of everything. His work was displayed and sold at regional level competitions, and he earned many awards.

His most vivid memory of high school, however, was none of these things but of 9/11, the day of the terrorist attack on the United States. He was sitting in school, wearing his JROTC uniform in Texas, and he cried with his classmates when they heard what happened to America. He said he thought to himself, "I can't believe this happened to my nation." My Nation. You see, as a kid, Alan always believed this was his Nation. It wasn't until he was unable to do things many of his friends could do that he realized he was undocumented in America, with no legal status. He couldn't get a driver's license like his buddies did. He couldn't apply for financial aid to go to college.

Alan still pursued his dream despite these obstacles. By the time he graduated from high school, he was working three jobs to save up enough money to go to school. He attended a local community college because he didn't have any money. He needed low tuition. He received an associate's degree from Dallas Community College. Then he transferred to the University of Texas, Arlington. There, he got a bachelor's degree in information systems management. After all his hard work, he graduated from college debt-free. That is how hard he worked. He paid for his education out of his pocket because he couldn't count on any Federal loans or financial aid.

Today, Alan Torres—this young, undocumented man, protected by DACA—is a software engineer for IBM. He developed software that helps medical providers across the country to better manage the health of over 50 million patients.

He wrote me a letter saying:

[DACA] is what I would pray for all those nights when I would stay up late doing homework or lay awake full of anxiety for the future. It has allowed me to fulfill my potential and reach my goals without the fear of not knowing if I am going to wake up in a strange country tomorrow. . . . Dreamers are not perfect, but we work hard, love this country, and would love the opportunity to show it.

Alan is one of 31 Dreamers working for IBM. People like Alan are the reason that IBM and a lot of business leaders are calling us and saying: Are you crazy, Senator? You would deport Alan Torres? He earned his education in the country the hard way. He succeeded where others failed. He has the ambition and drive that we all pray for in our children and those we admire, and you want to tell this man to leave the United States of America?

These business leaders are pretty hard-nosed about this. For their part, they have an excellent employee, and they don't want to lose him.

More than 400 business leaders wrote a letter to Congress urging us to pass the bipartisan Dream Act or DACA or whatever you want to call it. The letter says:

Dreamers are vital to the future of our companies and our economy. With them, we grow and create jobs. They are part of why we will continue to have a global competitive advantage.

That is the business viewpoint on this whole issue of the Dream Act.

In a few weeks, we want to go home for Christmas. We want to celebrate with our families. We understand that it is a special time of year for so many in America, this Christmas and Hanukkah season. We know we give thanks at Thanksgiving, but we give it again on Christmas Day as we count our blessings. One of the blessings we count on is the blessing of opportunity.

We know that in this great Nation, people have an opportunity to make a better life for themselves, their kids, for their future, and for our Nation. Think about Alan Torres over this Christmas, and think about 800,000 just like him, uncertain about what the new year will bring, uncertain because we have failed to act in Congress.

It was the President and Attorney General on September 5 who challenged us to do something. The President said: I am going to do away with Obama's Executive order, and now, Congress, do something. But all I hear from many of my colleagues is, well, let's see tomorrow if we can work this into the schedule or maybe next month or maybe the month after. We can't do that. There has to be a sense of urgency on our part too.

These young people—many of them have tearful speculation about their own future. I just talked to one of my colleagues from Colorado who came back from a meeting with half-a-dozen Dreamers, and as they told their story, they all broke down in tears. Do you know why? They are just about to give up hope—not on our country but on

us—on the Senate, on the House, on politics, on Congress. I think we are better than that.

This Nation of immigrants has many people with many great stories. The Presiding Officer told a great story about his family and what it meant personally growing up. I have heard it and I am inspired by it, as I am and he is by many other stories we hear. This is what America is all about.

This issue really tests who we are and what we believe in and what our values will be. There are 100 ways to get to the finish line, but we need to do it by December 22. That is when we are supposed to break for Christmas. Let's make sure that as we break for Christmas, we give these young people, these Dreamers, these DACA people we have protected, a bright future for a happy new year, literally.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleagues to really put a face to what we are talking about here when we in Washington are making decisions that are impacting the real lives of the people back home in our States.

I have to thank my colleague from Illinois, who has not only led the charge on this fight but has never given up for those Dreamers and their families, has really fought to show who they are because they are not numbers. They are real people.

I go home to my State, and on a regular basis I meet with Dreamers and their families, and it is no different. We sit around and we talk and tell stories about their struggle and their fight just to have that American dream. They are crying. Many are afraid to even tell their stories.

The first time I had an opportunity to sit with Dreamers, they had never told their story before because they were too afraid to tell it. They were too afraid that if they told it and left their home that day and went to work or went to school, that when they came back, their parents would not be there. It was the first time they came forward. It is no different now.

This administration and what they are doing is continuing the fear in our communities. That is why now more than ever we have to pass the Dream Act. Since this administration ended DACA, more than 11,000 DACA recipients have lost their status. Each week, 851 Dreamers are losing their protection. If we fail to pass legislation to protect Dreamers, 800,000 kids will be forced to watch their lives fall apart. They will lose their driver's licenses, their health insurance, their scholarships, their student loans, their work permits. They will face the constant threat of being detained, separated from their families, and forced out of the only home they know.

This is not just a crisis for these kids and their families, it is a crisis for our country, and it is a crisis for businesses

across America. If Dreamers lose their jobs, employers will incur nearly \$3.4 billion in costs. The Center for American Progress estimates that our GDP will shrink by \$460.3 billion over the next decade. Over 800 business leaders from companies like Airbnb, Amazon, Facebook, Google, Lyft, and Microsoft have signed a letter to Congress, as you have heard, urging legislators to pass the Dream Act. The value Dreamers add to our economy is apparent to our country's most innovative businesses, it is apparent to religious groups and advocacy organizations all across the Nation. What is it Congress is missing? Why are some Members of this body unable to see all the contributions these kids make?

This is also a moral crisis. We cannot turn our back on Dreamers. We must embrace them. They are living examples of what America stands for as a nation, built through the sweat and hard work of generations of immigrants.

Immigrants are a fundamental part of our communities. They always have been. They have built our railroads, our cities, our highways. They have founded businesses, invented groundbreaking technologies, and discovered lifesaving cures. Blue jeans, hamburgers, ketchup, YouTube, Google, Apple, even America's best idea—our national parks—these are iconic American inventions, and yet they were all created in whole or in part by immigrants.

Immigrants have held public office. One of Nevada's first Senators was an immigrant. His name was James Graham Fair, and he was born to a family in Ireland. His father brought him to the United States when he was a child to escape the potato famine. He grew up on a farm in Illinois and moved to Nevada in the 1850s to get involved in silver mining. He made a fortune when a repository of silver ore in northern Nevada, known as the Comstock Lode, was discovered. The discovery of this silver made him wealthy beyond belief. Overnight, he became one of Nevada's silver kings. He invested his fortune in railroads and real estate and eventually accumulated over \$40 million, and that is more than a billion dollars today.

In 1881, he was elected to represent Nevada in the U.S. Senate. In 1882, this Irish immigrant, a man who became a king because of the Comstock Lode, turned his back on other immigrants, and he voted in favor of the Chinese Exclusion Act. The Chinese Exclusion Act was a watershed moment in the history of American immigration policy because it was the first time the Federal Government restricted immigration on the basis of race. I tell you this story because, to me, the Chinese Exclusion Act exemplifies a vicious truth—that immigrants and their descendants are often the ones fighting to keep the next generation of immigrants out. Sadly, this Congress—a group that includes many descendants

of immigrants—is in danger of making the same mistake.

When are we going to acknowledge what basic economics, history, and scientific research have always proven to be true; that immigrants make our economy stronger, that immigrants come to our country and start businesses, apply for patents, create jobs, and invent technologies that change our world.

The 800,000 Dreamers in this country don't want special treatment. They want the chance to live their lives and do all of those things without the fear of deportation looming over their heads. We have a President who is not just refusing to give them that chance but actively spreading lies and hate about who they are. I wish I could say this xenophobia—this hate—is something we have never seen before, but anti-immigrant sentiment is nothing new. These attempts to shut our doors are as old as our Nation itself.

We are a nation of immigrants. We are caught in a vicious cycle. We look to our ancestors for inspiration. We benefit from the contributions of immigrants, but every generation, we default to the arrogance of power and treat immigrants as scapegoats and shut them out.

A teacher from Sparks, NV, recently contacted my office to share the fear and uncertainty kids and families are feeling right now. David wrote:

I teach music at Diedrichsen Elementary School in Sparks, and my wife is the Assistant Principal at Desert Heights Elementary in Stead. . . . We are seeing an increase in stress, acting-out behaviors and absences in our students from immigrant families. Another friend of mine who teaches at a school with a large immigrant population has told me about days when large numbers of children are absent because of rumors of raids by ICE.

These are the consequences of using immigrants as scapegoats.

We are facing another watershed moment in our country's history. People will ask: Where were you when Dreamers' lives were hanging in the balance? Did you use your voice? Did you speak out?

It is time to stop this cycle. It is time to do the right thing and pass the Dream Act, not just because it will add billions of dollars to our economy but because threats to immigrants are a threat to our communities, our safety, our lives, and the future of this country.

The Dream Act is an investment in our future. Republicans in Congress are looking for a way to reduce the Federal deficit. Well, I have a solution for you. Passing the Dream Act would decrease the Federal deficit by \$2.2 billion over 10 years. It turns out that the refrain we always hear that immigrants are taking away jobs is a myth. The economy is not a zero-sum game. Research shows that immigrants drive growth. They generate new patents at twice the rate of native-born Americans. In 2014, they earned \$1.3 trillion and contributed \$105 billion in State and local

taxes and nearly \$224 billion in Federal taxes. Immigrants are 30 percent more likely to start a business in the United States than nonimmigrants, and 18 percent of small business owners in the United States are immigrants. In 2007, these small businesses employed an estimated 4.7 million people and generated more than \$776 billion in revenue, but this fight is not just about our economy.

At its core, this fight is about 800,000 uncertain futures. When you meet Dreamers like I have, you will see they are not numbers, and they are not graphs. They are hard-working young people who are putting themselves through school and supporting their families.

They are young people like Maria, a Dreamer who was brought to the United States when she was 4 years old. Now, 22, she is working as a teacher and director of the Infant Toddler Program at a Montessori school in Washoe County, NV. She already has an associate's degree, but she plans to enroll in the University of Nevada, Reno to pursue a bachelors in education, human development, and family studies.

Maria sent me a letter to tell me her story, and she wrote:

I, as a Dreamer, am being truly affected by not knowing what will happen with my future. Since we moved here, I have learned what the meaning of true work ethic is and how to be a positive asset to our nation. Being a DACA recipient means I can never have a criminal record, I pay taxes, I have a great job teaching our youth, and am still working hard to continue my education. . . . I am here thanks to the selflessness and courage my mother showed, and I believe any parent would do the same for their children without hesitation. My mother followed all the rules to quickly become a true hard working member of this nation.

In her letter, Maria told me all she wanted was a chance to follow the rules, show her potential, and continue working as a teacher.

Maria's story is both an immigrant's story and an American story. It is a story about what happens when we give Dreamers a chance. Maria's story is no different from Sergey Brin's, the co-founder of Google who came here from Russia. It is no different from Madeleine Albright's, the first female Secretary of State, an immigrant from Czechoslovakia. It is no different from that of John Muir's, a Scottish immigrant, or that of Joseph Pulitzer's, a Hungarian immigrant, or that of Albert Einstein's, a German refugee.

Dreamers' stories are no different from my own. My grandfather was born in Chihuahua, Mexico. He crossed the Rio Grande to come to this country. He served in our military, became a citizen, married my grandmother, and he raised a family. His son, my father, began his career as a parking attendant at the old Las Vegas Dunes Hotel. He worked his way up through the ranks to become the first Latino on the Clark County Commission and then president of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority. My mom and

dad worked all of their lives so my sister and I could become the first in our family to earn a college degree.

My family taught me that when someone opens a door for you, you hold it open for the next person coming along after, and that is what I am in the Senate to do—to make sure every American gets that same opportunity my grandfather had, that my parents had, and that my sister and I had.

It is time to recognize that Dreamers are Americans, that their stories are no different from any of ours, that by taking away their protections, by allowing them to return to the shadows, we are allowing a vicious cycle to grind 800,000 dreams into the dust. It is time to learn from the mistakes of our predecessors. We must pass the Dream Act before the end of this year.

Thank you for listening.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I want to thank Senator DURBIN for organizing this time and for his leadership and advocacy on behalf of Dreamers across the country.

Passing the Dream Act is about more than the law. It is about compassion and basic human decency. There is nothing compassionate or decent about revoking the status that 800,000 young people, including 600 in Hawaii, depend on to live, work, and study in the only country they have ever known.

Relying on a promise from the Federal Government, these young men and women came out of the shadows, handed over personal information, and underwent extensive background investigations to earn their DACA status, but the President's actions have put them all at risk. Like so many people, I have been moved by stories of how DACA has transformed the lives of Dreamers across the country.

Earlier today, I spoke with two young Dreamers who flagged me down in the hallway as I was going from one hearing to another, and they asked to speak with me. One had traveled from Arizona and is only a high school student. He was all dressed up, and he had a bowtie on. The other who flagged me down in another part of the building lives in California and is originally from South Korea. Both asked me to continue to fight to pass the Dream Act before the end of this year.

To see these young people politely approaching Members of Congress like me—I don't think a lot of them even had appointments, but they had to study the faces of the Members of Congress so, as they saw us in the hallway, they could come up to us. So the fact that they politely asked to speak with me, even as they literally are fighting for their lives, speaks volumes. We should open our hearts to them and support their cause.

Like so many of my colleagues, I have met with Dreamers from my home State of Hawaii to hear about how DACA has changed and enriched

their lives. In October, I met with three young women studying at the University of Hawaii thanks to DACA.

Karen, Maleni, and Beatrice were, in many ways, like any other college student. They balance busy class schedules with part-time jobs and extracurricular activities. They have also lived in fear since the President and his Attorney General made the cruel and arbitrary decision to end DACA on September 5. Karen, Maleni, and Beatrice told me they hadn't received any notice about what would happen after the program ended on March 5, 2018, and depended on media updates that would literally determine their futures. They shared hopes and concerns most of us would take for granted.

When their newly issued driver's licenses expire, they may not be able to fly home to California to visit their families because they will no longer have valid IDs. After turning their information over to the Federal Government, they worry for their parents and families, many of whom are undocumented. When their work authorizations expire, they will have to drop out of college because they can't afford tuition.

Karen is pursuing her master's degree in conservation biology and environmental science and hopes to have a career in research. She said:

If I lose my DACA, that means I'd lose my work permit which means I lose my graduate assistantship which means I can't [graduate]. So thinking about those logistics is definitely scary. Because I wouldn't be able to complete my education unless I found another way to fund it.

[Dreamers] are working to improve our lives, and the lives of our families, and hopefully, through our professions, your life too. We're becoming doctors and lawyers and teachers and any field you can imagine there's probably at least one of us represented. So give us a chance.

Even with all they have been through, Karen, Maleni, and Beatrice told me they don't regret signing up for DACA because, although their futures are now in jeopardy, for a few years they were given a chance at their American dream.

Dreamers like Karen, Maleni, and Beatrice are not asking for much. They are just asking us, as Karen said, "for a chance." They are asking us to keep the promise we made to them, and it is in our power to do that.

Around 10,000 Dreamers have already lost their DACA status since Attorney General Sessions announced the program's end. Every day Congress doesn't act, 122 Dreamers lose their DACA status. We are taking away these young people's chances of staying in school, pursuing meaningful careers, and even visiting their families at Christmas.

While the President once called Dreamers "absolutely incredible kids" and made promise after promise to protect them, he has gone back on his word time and again. We can't rely on his empty promises.

I ask my colleagues to put yourselves in the shoes of these Dreamers. What if

your future in this country was uncertain after March 5? What if you were facing deportation to a country you don't even know so you have to start life all over again? What if your families lived in daily fear? If we can put ourselves in the shoes of Dreamers, what part of the Dreamers' uncertainty and living in fear can we not understand?

Is it because we are not them? Is it that we can only relate to someone's existence or experience only if we lived it ourselves? If that is the only way we can relate to people's problems—people who come to us for help—then we are in a very sorry state.

Most of us who serve in the Senate are only one or two generations removed from immigrant status or immigrant backgrounds. I, myself, am an immigrant. I was not born in this country. I came here with a single mother. I know what it is like to come to a new country where you don't speak the language and where you have to learn, where you have to adjust. All my mother asked for was a chance to attain the American dream.

It really bothers me that at the time when we were talking about passing comprehensive immigration reform, Member after Member came to the floor of the Senate and talked about their immigrant backgrounds. Yet too many of them were perfectly happy to shut the door on immigrants in this country—over 11 million undocumented persons—to shut the door in their faces; forgetting that most of us come from immigrant backgrounds; forgetting that this country, apart from the original people who were here, American Indians, we are all immigrants.

So let's put ourselves in the shoes of our Dreamers. Let's open our hearts to them. These are young people who just want to have a chance at the American dream that too many of us take for granted now. Let's not only be able to empathize with people whose experiences we have lived. Let's not be there, let's not go there.

I call on my colleagues to support the Dream Act now.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Hawaii and Senator DURBIN for his work and Senator CORTEZ MASTO, who is off to a really good start in her first year in the Senate. I thank them for their work on this issue that is personal to Senator CORTEZ MASTO and Senator HIRONO because they are not that far removed from coming to this country.

My family has been here longer, but this issue is personal to me because of the people I met whom I will mention in my relatively short remarks. I want to tell some stories about people I have met.

Immigrants in my State and across this country make vital contributions to our economy and local communities.

They are business owners and entrepreneurs. They are educators and students. They are workers and leaders in the community. They serve our Nation in the military.

For many immigrants brought here as children—and this is the key point—this is the only country they have ever known. They may speak Spanish at home or speak Arabic at home or they may speak Bengali at home or they may speak Urdu at home, but they don't know those countries they came from because they were small children when they came.

President Trump promised to go after violent criminals, not innocent children. Unfortunately, his efforts have been aimed not at violent criminals who should, in fact, be removed from our country, but he has gone after so many innocent families and innocent children.

My daughter Emily is a legal aid lawyer for immigration in Columbus. She has told me stories of families who have played by the rules, they worked hard, they are active in their church, they hold full-time jobs, and they are raising their kids. Their kids are doing well in school, and the mother and father get deported, not because they have ever committed a crime but because they came here a number of years ago to escape violence in the countries they came from.

Those are not the same situations exactly as these DACA kids, but we know who these DACA children are—these Dreamers. We shouldn't be targeting young people who are contributing to this country—the country they grew up in, and the only home they have ever known. They are working, going to school, paying taxes, and serving in our military.

Ariel was brought to the United States as a baby when he needed medical treatment for a rare condition. He has lived here ever since. He attends Cuyahoga Community College, a few hours from my home. He is working toward a degree in business administration. He wants to be an entrepreneur who will create jobs in his community and my community. Other Dreamers have jobs, and they are contributing already to our community.

I heard from Elvis, who grew up in Northwest Ohio. He graduated from Ohio State and works at Nationwide. He told us:

The contributions of DACA recipients are not only present in metropolitan areas but also in rural ones. This is evident to me, someone who grew up in rural Ohio, and whose family continues to live there, every day.

Nathali in Columbus works as a product development and design engineer at Honda. She has lived here since she was 9. Her DACA status expires this summer. If she isn't protected, she will probably have to give up her job. She is contributing to America's economy, to Ohio's auto industry, and she pays taxes.

I heard from Vania in Delta, OH, a suburban farm community west of Toledo. She oversees the entire human resources department in her company, one of the largest bell pepper growers in the country. She said:

I was raised in this community, graduated high school and college here, and am currently giving back to it in my role. I have established myself as a contributing member of this community and for this reason, among many others, I deserve a chance to continue my work.

All she says is: I want to continue my work. I want to continue raising a family. I want to continue contributing to this country. I want to continue to work in my community. I want to continue to be a good citizen. She is not asking for a handout. She wants what most Americans want, to be able to keep doing her work.

There is no question our immigration system is broken, but we don't fix it by kicking out these contributing members of our communities who grew up here—underscore that. They may not have been born here, but they grew up here. They know our country. They live in Toledo and Dayton and Xenia, and they live in Mansfield. Those are their lives, as it was my life growing up in Mansfield.

We don't fix our immigration system by kicking out these contributing members who grew up here and made their home here—who are American in every sense except the paperwork. It is time for us to come together to put partisan considerations aside and pass a commonsense solution that protects these kids, protects these Dreamers, and upholds our American values.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I want to thank all my colleagues who have spoken today. I really want to thank Senator DURBIN, who has been a friend and a mentor of mine since I came to the Senate almost exactly 4 years ago. I thank him for his leadership right now—really leading us on both sides of the aisle, as a central focal point for the Dreamers—and for his words. I thank him for his leadership today and throughout this effort, making sure we don't leave for the holidays, leaving thousands of children in our country who know no other country—young adults—in a purgatory where they are anxiously waiting to see if this body will act.

This is a time where we have seen incredible activism. I cannot tell you how many times I have been stopped by Dreamers who drove for over 24 hours—drove across this country to come to the Capitol to make their case known. They love this country. They serve this country. They only know this country. They were here before they could even speak. They and their fellow American allies have been struggling and toiling and fighting for recognition. It reminds me of generations of Americans in the past who were fighting and toiling and

struggling for recognition as citizens when citizenship was denied them.

I know stories from my own family, African Americans, who, literally, like many of these Dreamers—900 of these Dreamers—have served in the military. I know these stories from my family—people who served in war, served in World War II, served in Korea, like my father, and came back to a country that did not recognize their citizenship rights.

Women, Jews, Irish—so much of the story of America is Americans struggling and toiling and fighting, often coming to the Capital of the United States of America, fighting for recognition of their citizenship rights. They are patriots.

The young people I have encountered in my home State and the young people I have encountered here in the Capitol are patriots. Patriotism is love of country. I am one of these folks who believe that love of country is better seen than heard. I am telling you right now, the Dreamers I have encountered, their service, their sacrifice, their contributions to this country should resonate.

We know the data. Billions of dollars of our economy is being fueled by Dreamers who are here serving in every imaginable capacity—there for their neighbors, there for their community, there for other children, there for America.

I sat across from Dreamers in New Jersey who now, because of the inaction here in Washington, because of the uncertainty, these folks—for whom we have collectively contributed to their education, contributed to their success, and are enjoying the fruits of their success—are now suddenly withdrawing from schools. They are feeling nervous that they are going to be ripped away from family members—younger siblings who are already recognized citizens—as they fight for their citizenship rights. I have seen the pain. I have seen the anxiety. I have shared the tears as they continue this fight, hoping this body will act.

There are folks like Liz. She is a Dreamer from Ridgely, NJ. She literally created a startup business that employs over 800 people. She is a job creator, an entrepreneur, an innovator whom people rely on for their jobs, and we are going to turn around and say to Liz: You have to leave the United States of America, the only country you know.

What about people like Jesus Contreras? He was the paramedic from Houston who worked for 6 straight days, pulling all-nighter after all-nighter after Hurricane Harvey hit. Here is a guy who, when we faced a crisis and people's lives were on the line, stepped up. That is patriotism. That is love of country. You can't love your country unless you love your country men and women. The way you show you love your country men and women isn't just through the songs you sing and the pledges you make, it is the ac-

tions you take. In a crisis, he was there reaching out to American hands with his hand that is worthy.

Dreamers have been a gift to this Nation. They are hard-working patriots deserving of our respect. They come from a long tradition of people who have served this country, fought for this country, struggled for this country, who battled for respect from this country. They look up and say: I, too, am an American. Don't judge me by a piece of paper that says so. Look at my deeds. Look at my actions. Look at my life.

This, our wealth; this, our natural resource; the genius created in the image of God; we are going to cast these folks out of our Nation, and for what?

I believe that the opposite of justice is not injustice; it is inaction. It is indifference. It is apathy. This body has not acted. It has not shown a level of compassion to patriots. It has rewarded the service of these Dreamers and the sacrifice of these Dreamers with nothing but silence and inaction.

As other days before it, today I am glad that I stand with colleagues who will not be silent. This tradition in our country of solid citizens, of patriots who fought, who loved, who contributed to this country, this tradition that runs deep in my family, that runs deep in the families of so many here—when they were told they were not citizens, did not have equal rights—from suffragettes to civil rights activists—this body finally got it right and finally responded.

This is the dream of America. These young people are called Dreamers. This is the dream of America.

There was a man who talked about being denied his citizenship rights and who wrote a powerful poem that is as appropriate today as it was when he wrote it. His name is Langston Hughes. As these Dreamers struggle to be recognized for what they are—citizens of this country—as they put forth a dream that is no more precious or no more worthy than the dreams of my family, of your family, may the words of Langston Hughes speak to our spirits and our souls and motivate us. Langston said:

There is a dream in the land
With its back against the wall
By muddled names and strange
Sometimes the dream is called.

There are those who claim
This dream for theirs alone—
A sin for which we know
They must atone.

Unless shared in common
Like sunlight and like air,
The dream will die for lack
Of substance anywhere.

The dream knows no frontier or tongue,
The dream, no class or race.
The dream cannot be kept secure
In any one locked place.

This dream today embattled,
With its back against the wall—
To save the dream for one
It must be saved for all.

Mr. President, I tell you this with all of my heart: I have met these young

Americans. I have seen their service. I know their sacrifice. They have worn our uniforms, from our military uniforms to the uniforms of first responders. They have taught our children. They have benefited from our public schools—from our kindergartens, to our eighth grades, to our high schools, to our colleges, and to our universities. We have invested in them, and that investment is paying dividends. They are the American dream. They represent the best of who we are and who we aspire to be.

They collectively, with the other young people of this Nation, are our greatest hope for the future. If we cast them out, if we send them into the wildernesses of lands that are strange to them, to places where some of them don't even speak the tongue, it will be a sad day, a tragic day for them but even more so for us.

What does it say about a nation that turns its children away for no other reason than they came here when they were 2 or 3 and weren't born here? We are better than this. We are greater than this. Our Nation's ideals are loftier than this.

So in the same spirit that this body was slow to move to grant full citizenship rights to enslaved people, in the same way that this body was slow to move to finally grant citizenship rights to every woman in our country, and in the same spirit that this body was slow to move to grant full citizenship rights and voting rights and civil rights to African Americans, I hope we may summon in this generation, in a cause that is noble, the courage to do the right thing and not be stuck in inaction.

It is time for us to act as a body. It is time for us to recognize the full citizenship rights of those who have proven themselves already through the greatest actions one can do—service to another, service to our country, service to the ideals that we have.

Mr. President, thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am honored to join my colleagues on the floor today, and I want to thank our great and distinguished leader on this issue, Senator DURBIN, who has devoted so many years and so much energy and has been a model for me personally of what an advocate should be in the Senate and most especially on this issue, which has been preeminently important to me since my arrival here almost 7 years ago.

For a time, I was on the floor almost every week, periodically, with a photo of another Dreamer, and the reason was to make this issue real in the hearts of the American people, to bring their voices and faces to this body.

Today, I am joined in spirit by Alejandra Villamares. She is one of 8,000 Dreamers in Connecticut. I am proud of each and every one of them. She is one of 700,000 Dreamers in the United States of America, and I hope

that my colleagues are proud of them in their States, as well, because they are absolutely incredible people. Nobody's perfect, but in many ways, they embody the spirit and values of America. They work hard. They go to school. They are future engineers, scientists, nurses, and doctors. They are of immense value to our economy because they work and contribute, and they will better themselves through education, through their values. And they know what it means to be an American citizen. Even though they are not, they know the value of citizenship.

Alejandra came to this country when she was 1 year old. She was brought here by her parents, across the border from Mexico. Her family lived in a cramped, small house with her two uncles. They had very little money. She and her sister were bullied by students in elementary school because, of course, they had to learn English. They spoke with an accent. She told me: "My mother told me not to give up." That is what she wrote me a couple of days after the President of the United States announced that he would end the DACA Program. She wrote me 5 days after the Trump administration rescinded DACA, and her story has stuck with me, haunted me over these months, just as when I have met with Dreamers—as I did just this past Monday in Hartford, CT—to reassure them that I was going to fight every day that we have remaining in this session, their stories have haunted and moved and inspired me.

Alejandra was bullied, but even as she was bullied for speaking a different language—her native language—and learning English, even as her father was deported, even as her family was left without him and with even less support, they persevered.

She wrote to me: "I made it my mission to prove that I was worthy of being considered an American." How many of us, growing up, made it our mission to prove ourselves worthy of being an American? I daresay few of us considered that mission. Most of us take for granted that we are Americans, that we are citizens of the greatest country in the history of the world. Slowly but surely she learned English, and it became her primary language. In 2012, she got a break: The Obama administration enacted DACA. She could come out of the shadows. She could have a place, some security. That step unlocked for her—literally unlocked for her—the American dream.

For all of us who take for granted what it means to be an American, who have never made it a mission to become an American, we often take for granted the American dream. Well, we belong here. No one is going to send us away. No one is going to deport us to a land we have no knowledge of, to a place away from our friends and our families. But DACA meant something else as well, more than just emotional; it meant that she could go to college,

and she did. She went to Wesley, where she is now a student. For once, she had the immense luxury of not being afraid. She could go to college and study—as she is now studying—film and international relations. She felt empowered to speak up and participate in her community.

She worked at Delaware Goes to College Academy and the Summer Learning Collaborative. They both promote education for disadvantaged youth. She was now not only learning and studying at one of the great universities in our country but giving back to others, enabling others to climb that same ladder, young people with disadvantages like hers to make the most of themselves and to achieve that American dream.

When Attorney General Sessions, with the President's approval, rescinded DACA in September, Alejandra wrote to me:

I wanted this to be my country so badly. One thing that I knew from the bottom of my heart was that I wanted to stay here, and that I was an American.

Anyone who looks at Alejandra, knows her story, and hears her words has to be heartbroken that a young woman seeking so deeply to be an American, to live the American dream and American values, to give back to this country that she loves, and never to take for granted what so many of us do—we have to be heartbroken to hear those words and her story.

I have heard my colleagues say: Well, why now? Why not wait until after the new year? Why not wait until March? Why not wait? Waiting until March would mean an extension of her anxiety, apprehension, and fear. It would also mean the extension of a humanitarian crisis.

Make no mistake, for 8,000 young people in Connecticut and 700,000 in the United States of America, threatening deportation to them is an unprecedented message to the world and to ourselves. It says something about who we are. To leave them hanging is not only unfair, it is unworthy of us as Americans.

More practically speaking, tens of thousands of DACA recipients are estimated to have already lost their protection from removal. Kicking the can down the road would mean continued anguish for those 700,000 young people, and it would mean breaking a promise. They came forward. They provided their addresses, their cell phone numbers, their tax information on the promise that it would not be used against them.

It would mean instability in the job market, and it would hurt our economy. That is why employers are coming forward and urging us to act now. Companies have been forced to consider whether they should fire DACA recipients and train new employees in anticipation of the March deadline. It would churn and create turmoil if we fail to act. In fact, it already is creating chaos and confusion because

looming on the horizon ominously, inextricably, is the threat of mass deportation.

It would be a humanitarian nightmare, and it is a bureaucratic nightmare, as well, to wait. If the Dream Act is passed, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services has work to do. They need to develop new regulations, process applications. This involves conducting security checks, biometric screening, notifying the applicants, and doing the paperwork. Experts say that this process could take up to 7 months in total. So we are already late. We are already late in beginning and accomplishing this task.

If we delay our action, thousands of Dreamers will lose their protections before the law is fully implemented. Young, contributing members of our society—like Alejandra—who have done nothing wrong will be dragged back into the shadows, to lose their drivers licenses, to lose their jobs, to lose their sense of security, to fear every day the sound of police sirens, as so many do right now.

The administration has literally thrown a timebomb to this body, and it is ticking. We have the power to diffuse it. We have the power to do the right thing. We have the power and we have the obligation to truly give those 700,000 Dreamers the ability to make the most of themselves and make the most of this country.

Often, when I think of the Dreamers, I think of my father, who came to this country in 1935. He was 17 years old. He knew virtually no one. He spoke almost no English. He had not much more than the shirt on his back, and he was a Dreamer, although he came here legally. He became a U.S. citizen. Nobody loved this country more than my dad.

I sometimes think how sad and ashamed he would be about the way we have denied Dreamers the opportunity and security that he felt coming here, escaping persecution in Germany. This country has never been perfect, but we are the greatest country in the history of the world because we are a nation of immigrants.

If you are ever discouraged or down about your lives or about the country, you may want to try going to the immigration naturalization ceremonies in your State. They happen in Connecticut every week in courthouses. I go as often as I can on Fridays, when they usually occur, in Hartford, New Haven, and Bridgeport, because it is so uplifting. It is so very inspiring to see people who are moved and grateful beyond words—moved to tears—in becoming citizens of the United States.

The judges usually give me an opportunity to say a few words, and I thank them for wanting to become citizens. I tell them “You passed a test that most Americans couldn’t pass,” and they laugh, as perhaps some who are listening now would laugh because they know it is true.

They wanted to become American citizens, so they studied and they pre-

pared. Many of them came long distances, escaping persecution—just as my dad did—and left behind families, loved ones, jobs, careers. They wanted to be citizens. They will never take it for granted, nor will Alejandra if she is given that opportunity. She wants it too. She is a Dreamer, not only in name but in spirit. I hope all of us keep her in mind and in heart when we think about what we are going to do in the next couple of weeks.

As for me, I am determined that we should not leave here for our holiday without acting on this measure. I know we can do it if both sides of the aisle are reasonable, responsible, and responsive. The vast majority of the American people are with Alejandra. They know her as a neighbor; they know her as a friend. Even though they may never have met her, they know people like her who are in their communities, and they know the immense contribution that she and others like her can make.

I know so many of them who share that simple goal to become a U.S. citizen, and it begins with permanent status, a path—a path to earn citizenship. Whatever it may be called, it begins with a sense of security and belonging.

I hope this body will pass the Dream Act and give Alejandra and so many like her that opportunity to accomplish the American dream.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 356.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Mary Kirtley Waters, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Legislative Affairs).

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nomination be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

If there is no further debate, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Waters nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO STEVE JOHNSON

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize a longtime member of the Senate family who is concluding his tenure with us as this session comes to a close. His last day of service in the U.S. Senate will be December 22.

Steve Johnson, a resident of Annandale, VA, and a native of Freehold, NJ, is retiring as the manager of the Senate Dining Room after 22 years of service.

Steve has managed the Senate Dining Room with hospitality, professionalism, and graciousness. He is extremely knowledgeable about the history of the Senate Dining Room and has introduced many of our guests to the stained-glass George Washington Memorial Window, which is often the focal point for visitors.

The window was purchased by the Federal Government for the Capitol in 1910 from the artist, Maria Herndl, for \$1,000. The window’s Revolutionary War scene shows President George Washington on his white horse conversing with Marquis de LaFayette and Baron von Steuben, the drillmaster of the American Army. I only know the story behind the painting because Steve told me.

Steve sure knows his history, but his primary focus has always been on his team and the Members of this body. Under Steve’s leadership, the Senate Dining Room has been an ideal venue for conducting the important business of the U.S. Senate. Throughout his career, he has been responsible for overseeing and implementing the requests of Members of the U.S. Senate and has done so with efficiency, poise, and thoughtfulness.

Steve has always been resourceful and, at times, creative. Once, a former Senator who, at the time, happened to be the Vice President of the United States, ordered a lunch that had not been on the Senate Dining Room menu for several years, but thanks to Steve’s ingenuity, Vice President Joe Biden enjoyed his chopped salad immensely.

On another occasion, Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist stopped by the Senate Dining Room after a long day on Capitol Hill and ordered chocolate chip cookies and milk.

The cookies were not on the menu, nor were they in the kitchen, but they still showed up at the Chief Justice's table, thanks to Steve's quick thinking and resourcefulness.

Remarkably, during his Senate service, Steve also found the time to train and compete in 18 marathons. He has qualified and run the Boston Marathon seven times, and I hear that more marathons are in his future.

On behalf of myself and my colleagues, I wish to express our deep affection and gratitude to Steve Johnson for his 22 years of faithful service to the U.S. Senate. We will miss him dearly. We wish Steve and Joanne, his wife of 32 years, a happy and healthy retirement.

RECOGNIZING THE JOHN G. HEYBURN II INITIATIVE FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE FEDERAL JUDICIARY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today I wish to commemorate a groundbreaking program in my home State, the John G. Heyburn II Initiative for Excellence in the Federal Judiciary at the University of Kentucky. As I will explain, the initiative, under the leadership of my dear friend, Dr. Martha Heyburn, is both a testament to its namesake and a powerful representation of its leader. Through its work, this program will benefit and educate our citizens, students, and members of the Federal judiciary.

Judge John G. Heyburn II served on the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Kentucky for more than two decades. During his distinguished time on the bench, John excelled as a scholar, a jurist, and a public servant. He was a man of intellectual curiosity, which could be seen in his work and his relationships. In addition to his efforts in the Western District, Chief Justice William Rehnquist appointed John to serve on the Budget Committee of the U.S. Judicial Conference in 1994. John eventually became the committee's chairman in 1997, where he was responsible for working with Congress to set the budget for the Federal judiciary. In 2007, Chief Justice John Roberts appointed him to chair the Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation, a body tasked with promoting efficiency and consistency in litigation across the Federal courts.

During his career on the Federal bench, Judge Heyburn lived out a vision, in his words, "to ever improve the legal system considered the envy of the world." Through each of his roles, John sought to continue the development and improvement of the Federal judiciary, understanding that the quality of justice was inextricably tied to sound administration.

Throughout his life, I was proud to call John my friend. Like so many others who knew and cared for him, I was heartbroken by his passing in April of 2015.

After John's death, his wife, Martha, was left with what she called "the

unenviable task" of organizing his judicial papers. She expected to find his books, his notes, and his memos from a lengthy career on the Federal bench. What Martha found, however, surpassed even her grandest expectations.

For many of his most important cases, John maintained meticulous records of his decisions. For one case in particular, Martha found a collection of 26 drafted opinions, news clippings, source citations, and even the biographies of the law clerks who had helped John reach his final decision. She recalled that, during his career, John would work tirelessly on his opinions, struggling over individual words or sentences to ensure he got each and every word just right.

As she examined the vast quantity of research, documentation, and papers, Martha reached a conclusion that would ultimately inspire the establishment of the Heyburn Initiative. She knew "this doesn't belong in [her] basement." Martha recognized the historical importance of the documents she had found. She knew that these papers should be seen by wider audiences so future students of the law can learn from them and understand her husband's decisions and the decision-making of the broader Federal judiciary. Martha believed that if there were any chance that John's work could inspire a future student, it was her responsibility to help make that happen.

With this realization, Martha began to plan the future of the Heyburn Initiative. By organizing the papers and making them publically available, they would become the anchor of a national resource dedicated to understanding the Federal judiciary and its place in our democracy. Many of us are familiar with Presidential libraries and congressional centers throughout the country, but this project would be distinctive in its study of the Federal judiciary.

From an impressive career of service, John had accumulated a wealth of materials that would be of interest to many students and judicial researchers. However, Martha knew that, to make this new program attractive to a broad audience, she would need more papers than just those of her late husband.

Therefore, as is typical for a groundbreaker like Martha, she understood the best way to accomplish her goal would be to establish an archive with an ambitious mission. She wanted to create a repository for the papers of every article III judge in Kentucky's history that she could acquire. An undertaking of this size had never been attempted before in judicial archiving in any State, but Martha knew that, if she could pull it off, it would be an incredible resource for Kentuckians and those who study the courts for generations to come. From the initial planning stages through today, the Initiative has already obtained the papers of about a dozen Federal judges from Kentucky, and I expect that number to grow.

Next, Martha decided that, to be of greater benefit to future generations, the documents in an archive would need to be put in their proper context. One of the best ways to do that would be to record oral histories from policymakers, contemporaries, and the judges themselves. These interviews provide a personal account of the history of our Commonwealth and our Nation. They are an incredible resource for students and researchers now and in the future. To date, many of the Federal judges in Kentucky have agreed to provide their own accounts for the archive, discussing their opinions, their work, and the judiciary.

Martha chose to gather oral histories from other members of the Federal Government as well to show the interactions among the three branches at any particular moment in time, but to accomplish this feat, Martha would need resources and a staff to make her vision a reality.

She entered into an agreement with the University of Kentucky to host this portion of the Heyburn Initiative. Martha chose John's charge, "to ever improve the legal system considered the envy of the world," to be the initiative's mission statement, and I was proud to stand with her in Lexington in October of 2016 as she publically unveiled her vision. The initiative became her effort to enshrine her husband's legacy and to inspire future generations into public service.

With a permanent home and a vision for the future, the Heyburn Initiative launched its second component. After the passing of Associate Justice Antonin Scalia in February of 2016, Martha recognized a new level of awareness about the importance of the Federal courts throughout our Nation. That attention sparked her interest in developing an approachable and programmatic feature to the Heyburn Initiative by hosting speakers and conferences for the benefit of students, current judges, and the public.

By hosting these events in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Martha sought to make our State a destination for scholars and jurists, and she has already found great success in her efforts. In its first year, Martha hosted Chief Justice John Roberts and Associate Justice Neil Gorsuch at the Heyburn Initiative in Lexington. Both of these renowned jurists presented their views on the judiciary's particular place in our system of government.

During each of these visits, Martha ensured that the distinguished speakers participated in both public events and in meetings with law students. Her aim for these carefully organized interactions with some of the most influential jurists in our country was to provide an opportunity for inspiration and learning. She hoped that the students would be inspired by the speakers and, in turn, the speakers might be inspired by the students.

Martha also views Heyburn Initiative events as opportunities to showcase

our home State. With a “uniquely Kentucky” event, she wanted the visitors to remember more than just a judicial conference. Martha wanted the judges and justices to remember the culture of Kentucky. That is why, for example, when Chief Justice Roberts came to Lexington, she organized a group to attend a University of Kentucky men’s basketball game, a coveted experience in the Commonwealth.

In the Heyburn Initiative’s first year, it has already achieved much success and has set itself on course for a bright future, and the credit for all the achievements belongs to Martha. Her vision and tenacity grew this program from an idea into a national resource for students, judges, and scholars. I know that the Heyburn Initiative will continue to be a fitting legacy for John because Martha is leading it.

After so many accomplishments in 1 year, Martha has her sights set on further growth and success. She sees the Heyburn Initiative as an example for other States—to develop a home for the judiciary’s rich history and an inspiration for its future. I would like to congratulate my dear friend and her family on her many achievements, and I look forward to seeing the great things that Martha will continue to do.

TRIBUTE TO LIEUTENANT COMMANDER WENDY LEWIS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Lieutenant Commander Wendy Lewis of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps, who has served as a fellow to the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee for the past 3 years. I thank Lieutenant Commander Lewis for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the entire committee.

Lieutenant Commander Lewis has had a significant impact during her time as a fellow. Her expertise as a ship driver and manager of our Nation’s natural resources has meaningfully informed the committee’s efforts. She has worked on several pieces of legislation that have become law, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Sexual Harassment and Assault Prevention Act and the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017. Her contributions have enhanced the ability of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to carry out its missions and bettered the lives of those who work there.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Lieutenant Commander Lewis for all of the fine work she has done and for her continued service to our Nation. I wish her success in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO DAVID RADCLIFFE

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the tremendous service of David Radcliffe, who

joined our staff as a Brookings fellow this year. David’s expertise in defense, veterans, and homeland security issues was invaluable, helping to ensure we met the needs of Maryland. David came to our office with a wealth of policy knowledge from his civilian work at the Department of Defense and his military service as an Army Ranger. He not only adapted quickly to his work in the Senate, he helped define his role in a new office. His versatility, kindness, and equanimity endeared him to constituents across the State. David was unfazed by any change in plans or new last-minute requests, simply responding, “Semper Gumby”—always be flexible. His strong principles, willingness to pitch in wherever needed, and sense of humor made him a great colleague and terrific staffer in my office. We owe him a debt of gratitude, and we will miss him greatly. My whole staff and I wish him well as he embarks on his next journey in service to our country.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:03 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1730. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for the protection of community centers with religious affiliation, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2706. An act to provide requirements for the appropriate Federal banking agencies when requesting or ordering a depository institution to terminate a specific customer account, to provide for additional requirements related to subpoenas issued under the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act of 1989, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3093. An act to amend the Volcker Rule to permit certain investment advisers to share a similar name with a private equity fund, subject to certain restrictions, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3359. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3669. An act to improve and streamline security procedures related to general aviation and commercial charter air carrier utilizing risk-based security standards, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 1730. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for the protection of community centers with religious affiliation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 2706. An act to provide requirements for the appropriate Federal banking agencies when requesting or ordering a depository institution to terminate a specific customer account, to provide for additional requirements related to subpoenas issued under the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act of 1989, and for other

purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 3093. An act to amend the Volcker Rule to permit certain investment advisers to share a similar name with a private equity fund, subject to certain restrictions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 3359. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 3669. An act to improve and streamline security procedures related to general aviation and commercial charter air carrier utilizing risk-based security standards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Ms. MURKOWSKI for the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

*Timothy R. Petty, of Indiana, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior.

*Linda Capuano, of Texas, to be Administrator of the Energy Information Administration.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee’s commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. YOUNG, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 2217. A bill to require the Secretary of Commerce to establish the Federal Advisory Committee on the Development and Implementation of Artificial Intelligence, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. GARDNER):

S. 2218. A bill to provide for the conveyance of a Forest Service site in Dolores County, Colorado, to be used for a fire station; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. NELSON):

S. 2219. A bill to reduce the number of preventable deaths and injuries caused by underside crashes, to improve motor carrier and passenger motor vehicle safety, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 2220. A bill to provide for the development, construction and operation of a backup to the Global Positioning System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. JOHNSON:

S. 2221. A bill to repeal the multi-State plan program; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2222. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow for distributions from 529 accounts for expenses associated with registered apprenticeship programs; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. PETERS, Mr. COONS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. WARREN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. WARNER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. KING, Mr. CARPER, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. BROWN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. FRANKEN, and Ms. STABENOW):

S. Res. 357. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that international education and exchange programs further United States national security and foreign policy priorities, enhance United States economic competitiveness, and promote mutual understanding and cooperation among nations, and for other purposes; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. ISAKSON (for himself and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. Res. 358. A resolution designating December 3, 2017, as "National Phenylketonuria Awareness Day"; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 266

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 266, a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Anwar Sadat in recognition of his heroic achievements and courageous contributions to peace in the Middle East.

S. 322

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 322, a bill to protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence from emotional and psychological trauma caused by acts of violence or threats of violence against their pets.

S. 447

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 447, a bill to require reporting on acts of certain foreign countries on Holocaust era assets and related issues.

S. 487

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 487, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for an exclusion for assistance provided to participants in certain veterinary student loan repayment or forgiveness programs.

S. 654

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms.

HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 654, a bill to revise section 48 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes.

S. 793

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 793, a bill to prohibit sale of shark fins, and for other purposes.

S. 794

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 794, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act in order to improve the process whereby Medicare administrative contractors issue local coverage determinations under the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 821

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 821, a bill to promote access for United States officials, journalists, and other citizens to Tibetan areas of the People's Republic of China, and for other purposes.

S. 1051

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1051, a bill to encourage visits between the United States and Taiwan at all levels, and for other purposes.

S. 1091

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1091, a bill to establish a Federal Task Force to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren.

S. 1132

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1132, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to make permanent the removal of the rental cap for durable medical equipment under the Medicare program with respect to speech generating devices.

S. 1503

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) were added as cosponsors of S. 1503, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition of the 60th anniversary of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

S. 1633

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1633, a bill to promote innovative approaches to outdoor recreation on

Federal land and to open up opportunities for collaboration with non-Federal partners, and for other purposes.

S. 1738

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1738, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for a home infusion therapy services temporary transitional payment under the Medicare program.

S. 1767

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1767, a bill to reauthorize the farm to school program, and for other purposes.

S. 1842

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1842, a bill to provide for wildfire suppression operations, and for other purposes.

S. 1850

At the request of Mr. MANCHIN, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1850, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to protect the confidentiality of substance use disorder patient records.

S. 1871

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1871, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the role of podiatrists in the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 1901

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1901, a bill to require global economic and political pressure to support diplomatic denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, including through the imposition of sanctions with respect to the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and any enablers of the activities of that Government, and to reauthorize the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004, and for other purposes.

S. 1989

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the names of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. McCASKILL), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) were added as cosponsors of S. 1989, a bill to enhance transparency and accountability for online political advertisements by requiring those who purchase and publish such ads to disclose information about the advertisements to the public, and for other purposes.

S. 2107

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms.

COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2107, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Under Secretary of Health to report major adverse personnel actions involving certain health care employees to the National Practitioner Data Bank and to applicable State licensing boards, and for other purposes.

S. 2135

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) were added as cosponsors of S. 2135, a bill to enforce current law regarding the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

S. 2143

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2143, a bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to strengthen protections for employees wishing to advocate for improved wages, hours, or other terms or conditions of employment, to expand coverage under such Act, to provide a process for achieving initial collective bargaining agreements, and to provide for stronger remedies for interference with these rights, and for other purposes.

S. 2144

At the request of Mr. VAN HOLLEN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2144, a bill to provide a process for granting lawful permanent resident status to aliens from certain countries who meet specified eligibility requirements.

S. 2159

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2159, a bill to require covered harassment and covered discrimination awareness and prevention training for Members, officers, employees, interns, fellows, and detailees of Congress within 30 days of employment and annually thereafter, to require a biennial climate survey of Congress, to amend the enforcement process under the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights for covered harassment and covered discrimination complaints, and for other purposes.

S. 2202

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2202, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to authorize appropriations for the National Transportation Safety Board, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 150

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 150, a resolution recognizing threats to freedom of the press and expression around the world and re-

affirming freedom of the press as a priority in efforts of the United States Government to promote democracy and good governance.

S. RES. 250

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 250, a resolution condemning horrific acts of violence against Burma's Rohingya population and calling on Aung San Suu Kyi to play an active role in ending this humanitarian tragedy.

S. RES. 285

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 285, a resolution honoring the life and achievements of Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook.

S. RES. 346

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 346, a resolution recognizing the importance and effectiveness of trauma-informed care.

S. RES. 350

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 350, a resolution recognizing the 69th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the celebration of "Human Rights Day".

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2222. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow for distributions from 529 accounts for expenses associated with registered apprenticeship programs; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2222

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. DISTRIBUTIONS FROM 529S FOR REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 529(e)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(C) CERTAIN EXPENSES ASSOCIATED WITH REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS.—The term ‘qualified higher education expenses’ shall include books, supplies, and equipment required for the enrollment or attendance of a designated beneficiary in an apprenticeship program registered and certified with the Secretary of Labor under section 1 of the National Apprenticeship Act (29 U.S.C. 50).”

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to contributions made and distributions paid after December 31, 2017.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 357—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND EXCHANGE PROGRAMS FURTHER UNITED STATES NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITIES, ENHANCE UNITED STATES ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS, AND PROMOTE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION AMONG NATIONS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. PETERS, Mr. COONS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. WARREN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. WARNER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. KING, Mr. CARPER, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. BROWN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. FRANKEN, and Ms. STABENOW) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 357

Whereas hundreds of thousands of United States secondary and post-secondary students, from congressional districts in all 50 States, study overseas each year;

Whereas, according to the Department of State, more than 1,000,000 international students and other international education and exchange participants annually help create mutual understanding by living, studying, and working in local communities throughout the United States;

Whereas international education and exchange programs serve an effective and proven diplomatic function with countries key to United States foreign policy and national security priorities, encouraging goodwill towards the United States;

Whereas promoting the United States as a destination for international students and professionals, while encouraging United States students and professionals to gain international experience abroad, are wise investments in our Nation's economic competitiveness;

Whereas it is imperative that United States students understand how to interact with their peers from around the world and operate in multicultural environments;

Whereas it is important to diversify the pool of United States citizens participating in international study and exchange experiences, including groups that have been historically underrepresented in these programs;

Whereas students and other young people are the world's future leaders and innovators;

Whereas there are multitudes of private, not-for-profit organized and funded exchange programs and many that are funded by the United States Government;

Whereas international education and exchange programs exist at multiple levels of the educational spectrum, including high school, undergraduate, graduate, educator, citizen, cultural, and sports programs;

Whereas according to an economic analysis of international student enrollment data and tuition data by NAFSA: Association of International Educators—

(1) international students consistently have a positive impact on the United States economy and job creation in every State and Congressional district;

(2) international students studying at United States colleges and universities contributed \$32,800,000,000 to the United States economy and supported more than 400,000 jobs during the 2015-16 academic year, which represents a 7.2 percent increase in job support and creation and a 7 percent increase in money contributed to the economy compared to the previous academic year;

Whereas exchange experiences enable international visitors to become informal ambassadors for their home countries while they are in the United States and for the United States when they return to their home countries by sharing an appreciation for common values, counteracting stereotypes, and enhancing mutual respect for cultural differences;

Whereas research indicates that the United States needs to encourage more students to graduate with expertise in foreign languages, cultures, and politics to fill the demands of business, government, and universities;

Whereas international education and exchange programs are a particularly effective way for American students to develop foreign language capability and cultural awareness, which are skills that United States employers seek to remain globally competitive; and

Whereas international education and exchange programs shape the views and opinions of participants, many of whom are or will become leaders in their communities, both in the United States and abroad:

Now, therefore, be it
Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes that international education and exchange programs—

(A) enhance national security;

(B) further United States foreign policy goals and economic competitiveness; and

(C) promote mutual understanding and cooperation among nations;

(2) encourages international education and exchange programs to ensure that the United States maintains a broad international knowledge base;

(3) supports international education and exchange programs as a means of strengthening foreign language skills and fostering a better understanding of the world by United States citizens, especially youth;

(4) commends the American and international education and exchange participants, volunteers, educators, program alumni, host families, high schools, colleges, universities, and host communities for their involvement in such programs; and

(5) celebrates the integral role international education and exchange programs play for the United States and its people.

SENATE RESOLUTION 358—DESIGNATING DECEMBER 3, 2017, AS “NATIONAL PHENYLKETONURIA AWARENESS DAY”

Mr. ISAKSON (for himself and Ms. BALDWIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 358

Whereas phenylketonuria (in this preamble referred to as “PKU”) is a rare, inherited metabolic disorder that is characterized by the inability of the body to process the essential amino acid phenylalanine and which causes intellectual disability and other neurological problems, such as memory loss and mood disorders, when treatment is not started within the first few weeks of life;

Whereas PKU is also referred to as Phenylalanine Hydroxylase Deficiency;

Whereas newborn screening for PKU was initiated in the United States in 1963 and was

recommended for inclusion in State newborn screening programs under the Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act of 2007 (Public Law 110-204);

Whereas approximately 1 out of every 15,000 infants in the United States is born with PKU;

Whereas PKU is treated with medical food; Whereas the 2012 Phenylketonuria Scientific Review Conference affirmed the recommendation of lifelong dietary treatment for PKU made by the National Institutes of Health Consensus Development Conference Statement 2000;

Whereas, in 2014, the American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics and Genetic Metabolic Dieticians International published medical and dietary guidelines on the optimal treatment of PKU;

Whereas medical foods are medically necessary for children and adults living with PKU;

Whereas adults with PKU who discontinue treatment are at risk for serious medical issues, such as depression, impulse control disorder, phobias, tremors, and pareses;

Whereas women with PKU must maintain strict metabolic control before and during pregnancy to prevent fetal damage;

Whereas children born from untreated mothers with PKU may have a condition known as “maternal phenylketonuria syndrome”, which can cause small brains, intellectual disabilities, birth defects of the heart, and low birth weights;

Whereas, although there is no cure for PKU, treatment involving medical foods, medications, and restriction of phenylalanine intake can prevent progressive, irreversible brain damage;

Whereas access to health insurance coverage for medical food varies across the United States and the long-term costs associated with caring for untreated children and adults with PKU far exceed the cost of providing medical food treatment;

Whereas gaps in medical foods coverage has a detrimental impact on individuals with PKU, their families, and society;

Whereas scientists and researchers are hopeful that breakthroughs in PKU research will be forthcoming;

Whereas researchers across the United States are conducting important research projects involving PKU; and

Whereas the Senate is an institution that can raise awareness of PKU among the general public and the medical community: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates December 3, 2017, as “National Phenylketonuria Awareness Day”;

(2) encourages all people in the United States to become more informed about phenylketonuria and the role of medical foods in treating phenylketonuria; and

(3) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to the National PKU Alliance, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of individuals with phenylketonuria.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I have 9 request for committees to meet during today’s session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to Rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today’s session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 12, 2017, at 10 a.m. in room SD-366 to consider the following nominations: Linda Capuano, of Texas, to be Administrator of the Energy Information Administration, Department of Energy, and Timothy R. Petty, of Indiana, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 12, 2017, at 10 a.m. in room SD-366 to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 12, 2017, at 10 a.m. in room SD-430 to conduct a hearing entitled “The Cost of Prescription Drugs: An Examination of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Report ‘Making Medicines Affordable: A National Imperative’”.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 12, 2017, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled “Oversight of the Ensuring Patient Access and Effective Drug Enforcement Act”.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 12, 2017, at 2:30 p.m. in room SH-219 to conduct a closed hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATION, TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION, AND THE INTERNET

The Subcommittee on Communication, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 12, 2017, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled “Digital Decision-Making: the Building Blocks of the Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence”

SUBCOMMITTEE OCEAN, ATMOSPHERE, FISHERIES, AND COAST GUARD

The Subcommittee Ocean, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 12, 2017, at 2:30 p.m. in room SR-253 to conduct a hearing entitled “National Ocean Policy: Stakeholder Perspectives”.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE AND REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION

The Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation of the Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 12,

2017, at 10 a.m. in room SR-253 to conduct a hearing entitled "European Energy Security: U.S. Interests and Coercive Russian Diplomacy".

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA AND GLOBAL HEALTH
POLICY

The Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health Policy of the Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 12, 2017, at 2 p.m. to conduct a hearing entitled "The Future of Zimbabwe".

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE
SENATE THAT INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION AND EXCHANGE
PROGRAMS FURTHER UNITED
STATES NATIONAL SECURITY
AND FOREIGN POLICY PRIOR-
ITIES

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 357, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 357) expressing the sense of the Senate that international education and exchange programs further United States national security and foreign policy priorities, enhance United States economic competitiveness, and promote mutual understanding and cooperation among nations, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the measure.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

If not, the question is on agreeing to the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 357) was agreed to.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the preamble be agreed to and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

NATIONAL PHENYLKETONURIA
AWARENESS DAY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 358, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 358) designating December 3, 2017, as "National Phenylketonuria Awareness Day."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 358) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY,
DECEMBER 13, 2017

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 12 noon, Wednesday, December 13; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Willett nomination; finally, that all time during recess, adjournment, morning business, and leader remarks count postcloture on the Willett nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL TOMORROW

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:03 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, December 13, 2017, at 12 noon.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate December 12, 2017:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MARY KIRTLEY WATERS, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS).

THE JUDICIARY

LEONARD STEVEN GRASZ, OF NEBRASKA, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE EIGHTH CIRCUIT.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT OF CHAUNCY D. BUCHHEIT

HON. JASON SMITH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Chauncy D. Buchheit, Executive Director of the Southeast Missouri Regional Planning and Economic Development Commission in Perryville, MO. Mr. Buchheit began his work for the Commission in 1980 and was named Economic Developer of the Year by the Missouri Economic Development Council in 2003.

He has helped make communities better throughout Southeast Missouri as he worked to help both the public and private sectors identify needs, secure funding and pave the way for economic development. For almost 40 years, Chauncy has proven to be a valuable resource for cities and towns in the 7-county region he serves.

As he retires at the end of 2017, Chauncy's enthusiastic participation in economic growth, his valuable expertise and his genuine sense of caring for Southeast Missouri will be genuinely missed by all of us who were privileged to work together with him to make Missouri better.

It is my great pleasure to honor Chauncy D. Buchheit today before the United States House of Representatives for his passionate dedication to the people of Southeast Missouri.

A LETTER FROM CONSTITUENT LINDA SOBEL KATZ URGING CONGRESS TO HELP CANCER PA- TIENTS GET THE CARE THEY DESERVE

HON. JAMIE RASKIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with my colleagues a beautiful letter I received from my constituent Linda Sobel Katz, a former legislative aide to one of my predecessors in the House of Representatives from Maryland's 8th Congressional District, Representative Michael Barnes. To summarize Linda's thoughts would be a disservice to her passionate and eloquent message about America's priorities today, so I will simply include in the RECORD her letter:

"In the late 70s and early 80s, I was honored to be an aide to Maryland Congressman Mike Barnes on international human rights issues. It was my job to help Rep. Barnes speak out for those suffering discrimination and worse in their homelands. The climate in Congress was different then. Democrats and Republicans willingly forged coalitions to protect and rescue individuals from hostile leadership far from our shores. As a commu-

nications consultant, this is the path I have chosen for my life's work—to champion causes to help better humanity and our environment.

"Never did I ever think I would need to speak out for myself, especially to the esteemed U.S. Congress—once a beacon of democracy, fairness, and justice to the free world and those silenced by totalitarianism.

"As an American citizen who deeply cherishes our land, I am horrified by the indifference of the majority in Congress who would strike out against innocent Americans. First, against children who are losing their CHIP coverage. To what gain? And now, against Americans suffering from one of humankind's worst diseases—cancer. To what benefit?

"What you are doing is causing a sense of powerlessness and despair among those you have a sworn duty to protect. I am such a constituent. As of this writing, you still have not restored the Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP, which expired September 30. And you show the worst side of your natures by denying coverage for cancer treatment to those over 65 and paying for Medicare.

"I have been raising my granddaughter Sabrina, as her legal guardian, for the past 10 years since the death of her mother when Sabrina was four. During this time, I also spent seven years caring for a husband with Alzheimer's. Formerly co-owner of an insurance agency, my husband Hershel was denied long-term care coverage because of two prior heart attacks in his 40s and 50s. CHIP has been a godsend.

"We paid for Hershel's huge health needs out of pocket, and it was nerve-wracking to consider whether our family could survive financially.

"I am grateful that we are able to live in my home of nearly 40 years in a comforting neighborhood of Silver Spring, just outside the Nation's Capital.

"Less than a year after my husband's passing in November 2015—with no symptoms, other than a yellow tinge to my eyeballs, and feeling in good health—I was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, one of the most deadly forms of this insidious disease. I have been in chemotherapy at Georgetown University Hospital for a year and remain stable after an initial setback that prevented me from undergoing a previously planned Whipple surgery to remove the tumor.

"But chemotherapy is not a permanent fix and has its own limiting side effects. With my oncologist, we must explore clinical trials and other emerging treatments to find a way for me to stay alive so I can continue to raise my granddaughter, now 13 and in 8th grade. Robust federal funding for cancer research is so critical to the survival of cancer patients. And so is the reassurance of coverage for treatment through Medicare.

"Dear Members of Congress, do not wash your hands of cancer patients on Medicare. So many of us continue to contribute to family life and society in myriad, constructive ways. Surely, you must have family members, friends, and constituents suffering from cancer through no fault of their own. Why strip away our hope and ability to live fully and be useful members of our communities? Why choose to be cruel, heartless, and mindless leaders lacking compassion for your fellow citizens? You are fostering an unjust

world, not the America that sets the example for civilized behavior and wins universal respect.

"I have a personal wish to live five more years so that I can continue to raise my beautiful, bright, and wise granddaughter and see her graduate from high school and be launched into a future of service and commitment in a gracious and caring world.

"Yes, she does wonder what will happen to her if I die because cancer treatment is no longer accessible to me, especially knowing that her U.S. government precipitated this hostile action. What a tremendous burden for a young teen!

"So, I ask: What will you do to ensure that children have a healthy future and that cancer patients get the care they deserve? Our health care system should be a model in a world still craving for leadership from America. Do not let us down."

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to heed this thoughtful message and ensure that children in our country have meaningful access to health care; to have the courage to stand up for the cancer patients, the sick and suffering, the chronically-ill and their families who rely on Medicare to keep them alive; and to demonstrate, as Linda says, true American leadership. America is counting on Congress. Let us act with wisdom and decency comporting with our highest values.

RECOGNIZING THE SERVICE OF MR. GAYRON FERGUSON

HON. JAMES COMER

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Mr. COMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay special recognition to Mr. Gayron Ferguson, Jr. for his service to our troops and his remarkable leadership through The Hugs Project of Western Kentucky.

Mr. Ferguson's patriotic aptitude is evident through his leadership of The Hugs Project and his over 10 years of volunteer work supporting our troops. Through this great organization, Mr. Ferguson donates his time to sending care packages to our brave men and women serving abroad.

Because of Mr. Ferguson's robust leadership, more than 40,000 care packages have made their way to over 12,000 troops in the Middle East. With his helping hand and enthusiasm for giving back to others, those serving overseas can receive a little piece of home through The Hugs Project.

It is individuals like Mr. Ferguson whose patriotic spirit and sense of compassion creates lasting impacts on our communities and ultimately create a better world through service and consideration of others, especially our troops. I congratulate Mr. Ferguson on his years of volunteerism through The Hugs Project and the joy he has brought over the years to countless men and women serving abroad.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

On behalf of the First District of Kentucky, I am honored to recognize Mr. Gayron Ferguson as an outstanding leader in service to our troops and wish him continued success in his future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TERRI A. SEWELL

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, during Roll Call votes held on December 12, 2017, I was inescapably detained handling important matters related to my District and the State of Alabama. Had I been present, I would have voted YES on the Democratic Motion to Recommit H.R. 3971, and NO on Final Passage of H.R. 3971.

TESTIMONY OF JAYLA JOHNSON

HON. BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD, the testimony of Jayla Johnson.

Mr. Speaker, distinguished members of Congress and fellow citizens. I am from Council Rock North High School located in Newtown Bucks County. I am Jayla Johnson. I come from an area that's majority white and upper middle class. I am the model minority. Let me tell you all about it. Last year during spirit week on pride day I was in school when I saw a student walk around with a confederate flag draped on him. I hope you're wondering WHY and HOW that happened. The school allowed the student to walk through the halls for more than half the day due to their first amendment right. Now what about my safety? I reported the incident to my administration in which they said they could kindly ask the student to remove it in due time. I confronted the student within minutes and in their response was that he got it from his parents. To me that basically said he did not know the hate behind it, and did not see it as a problem. This conversation led to my family and I having a mandatory meeting with my superintendent, in hopes to change the school's policy handbook. I was somewhat not satisfied because I wanted more action to be done and take place than just words on a piece of paper, that is easily not read by many. From then and the hate that is shown in my school I started a club called V.O.I.C.E. meaning, Voices Of Inequality at Council rock north Everyday. This club is for students who want to make a difference and have dialogue on topics that we are not familiar with whether that is with where we live and or who we interact with. Be an up stander rather than a bystander. So I propose this question to you all in Congress, how can you make a change? Does that come from making a policy for ALL schools regarding no tolerance for racism, bigotry, and so many other isms? Let's rather make it mandatory students take a class to help them learn and be better United States Citizens? We are here at school to learn and leave to serve but how can we serve the world when we are not taught about it in school and or familiar with all races and ethnicities. I hope to hear back from Congress in hopes to change the

world for us since we are the leading future. Thank you for listening and please take this into consideration. Once again I am Jayla Johnson and I speak for the unheard voices and will continue to.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JAMES B. RENACCI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Mr. RENACCI. Mr. Speaker, had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 672, and YEA on Roll Call No. 673.

GUS KENWORTHY OLYMPICS 2018 TRIBUTE

HON. SCOTT R. TIPTON

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Gus Kenworthy of Telluride, Colorado. Mr. Kenworthy will be one of hundreds of other athletes competing in the 2018 Olympics in PyeongChang, South Korea as part of Team USA.

Mr. Kenworthy is an accomplished freestyle skier who has competed in slopestyle and halfpipe competitions for most of his adult life. His hard work and dedication has led to numerous commendations. From 2011 to 2013 he won the Association of Free-skiing Professionals World Championships overall titles. In 2013 while competing in the X Games he was awarded the bronze medal in slopestyle skiing as well as two silver medals in 2016 for the superpipe and slopestyle competitions.

Next years' Olympics won't be the first time Mr. Kenworthy is competing in the Olympic Games. In 2014, he represented Team USA in the Sochi Olympics and won a silver medal in the slopestyle event. His qualifying events for the 2018 games in the halfpipe will take place at Copper Mountain December 6 through 8, and for slopestyle in Breckenridge on December 15.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored that Mr. Kenworthy will be representing not only the United States but the people of Telluride, Colorado in the 2018 Olympics. I stand with the people of the Third District in recognizing him for his achievements and wishing him luck in next years' Olympic events.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House Chamber for Roll Call votes 672 and 673 on Monday, December 11, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea on Roll Call votes 672 and 673.

HONORING THE GOLIAD HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY VOLLEYBALL TEAM

HON. FILEMON VELA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Goliad High School Varsity Volleyball team. On November 18th, the Goliad Tigerettes won their second consecutive UIL Class 3A Texas State Volleyball Championship. They defeated the Callisburg Wildcats with an impressive 3-1 game record.

Under the leadership of Superintendent Dave Plymale, Goliad High School Principal Brenda Gohmert, Athletic Director Bobby Nicholson, Athletic Trainer Gary Hobbs, Head Coach Jess Odem, Assistant Coaches Lindsey Youngblood and Kelly Hill, Manager Kylie Neuvar, and Student Trainer Grace Schubert, the team consisting of Freshmen players Molle Henicke and Karleigh Hill, Sophmores Brooke Yanta and Ashlyn Davis, Juniors Kassidy Nicholson, Amaya Brown, Kaci Hotz, Kelly Thomas and Maddie Council, and Seniors Kaitlyn Duval, Mallory Hermes and Savannah Shaw have cemented themselves as one of the top athletic teams in Texas.

The Tigerette's success reflects an impressive level of skill and teamwork, and I applaud the coaches, administrators, families, and friends who supported the Tigerettes.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing this impressive accomplishment. On behalf of Congress and the Goliad community, we extend our congratulations on consecutive state titles and wish each player success in their future endeavors.

TRIBUTE HONORING OF DR. CHARLES P. NEIMEYER, U.S. MARINE CORPS

HON. WALTER B. JONES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise today and pay tribute to Dr. Charles P. Neimeyer. A great American, Dr. Neimeyer will be retiring from Federal Service this month after serving 11 years as the Director and Chief of Marine Corps History, Quantico, Virginia. Prior to his time at Quantico, Dr. Neimeyer had an accomplished career as the Dean of Academics at the Naval War College, Forrest Sherman Chair of Public Diplomacy in Newport, Rhode Island, and the former Vice President of Academic Affairs at Valley Forge Military Academy and College. During his 20 year career as a military officer in the U.S. Marine Corps, Dr. Neimeyer served in a variety of posts and stations, including tours in all three active U.S. Marine Divisions and service at the White House under Presidents George H.W. Bush and William J. Clinton. He retired from active duty at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in 1996.

Dr. Neimeyer is a graduate of the University of Maryland and successfully earned distinguished graduate degrees from Georgetown University and the U.S. Naval War College.

He is the author of a variety of historical monographs and countless national security affairs articles. His most recent work, *War in the Chesapeake: The British Campaigns to Control the Bay, 1813–1814*, was published by the U.S. Naval Institute in 2015, and went on to win the prestigious Simmons-Shaw award in 2017 given by the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation for the best scholarly work by a federal historian.

Dr. Neimeyer's service as the Director of the Marine Corps History Division has been marked with great success. During his tenure, he was able to increase the historical output of his division by over 1000 percent. He also reorganized the division's branches and sent historians "down range" to cover the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, thereby ensuring the preservation of the critical operational history of our nation's foremost fighting service, the United States Marine Corps.

In addition, Dr. Neimeyer established the Marine Corps University Journal at Quantico. This journal now publishes cutting edge scholarships and work from students, faculty, and outside authors. The journal is leading the way toward a greater understanding of today's complex national security strategies. Because of these endeavors, Dr. Neimeyer's historical expertise on the United States Marine Corps has been sought out over the years by senior level officials in both the public and private sectors.

Most recently, Dr. Neimeyer served as a member of the board of inquiry that reevaluated the Marines we formerly believed to have been two Jima flag raisers on February 23, 1945. Thanks to the professionalism of Dr. Neimeyer, and the other board members, the Marine Corps and the nation now know the identities of the actual flag raisers on top of Mount Suribachi on that fateful day. As a result of this experience, Dr. Neimeyer volunteered to serve as the staff historian for the two Jima Association of America—a veteran's organization dedicated to preserving the history and heritage of the Battle of Iwo Jima.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for Dr. Neimeyer's service both as a Marine officer and as the Chief of Marine Corps History. Over the past several years, Dr. Neimeyer provided invaluable and relevant historical information to my office. His timely data was always on target and nothing short of the exceptional quality I would expect from the chief historian of the United States Marine Corps. I am very appreciative of Dr. Neimeyer's service to our nation and thankful for the outstanding support his wife, Janet Louise, daughter, Kelli Klein, and two sons, Patrick and Christopher, gave him throughout his life. I want to thank Dr. Charles P. Neimeyer once again for his 20 years of service as an active duty Marine, and 17 years as a federal civil servant. I wish his beloved family fair winds and following seas as he and his wife embark on a new chapter in life.

RECOGNIZING JERUSALEM AS
CAPITAL OF ISRAEL

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Holy City of Jerusalem is recognized as one of the

oldest cities in the world. It is also the eternal capital of the State of Israel and the Jewish people. Founded during the dawn of civilization, the city has been destroyed twice, captured and recaptured 44 times, and controlled by numerous great empires including the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, and Ottomans throughout its 6,000 year history. Throughout the centuries, Jerusalem has always been the spiritual capital of the Jewish people.

The Jewish people's connection to Jerusalem is clearly recorded in the Bible, with the city being mentioned by name 811 times. King David, the Biblical and historic King of Israel, made Jerusalem his capital in 1,000 BC. His son, Solomon, built the Holy Temple that was the center of the Jewish faith on Mount Moriah in the Old City of Jerusalem. After its destruction by the Babylonians in 586 BC, it was rebuilt years later only to again be destroyed by the Romans in the year 70 CE. Remnants of the ancient temple still remain with the Temple Mount and its outer wall, known as the Western Wall, serving as the holiest site in Judaism today.

When the Romans destroyed the Temple and Jerusalem, it expelled its Jewish inhabitants, forbidding them from settling in the rebuilt city. Meanwhile, Muslim and Christian armies battled for the city, erecting their own shrines over top of the Jewish ones. We cannot ignore the importance the Temple Mount also holds to Christians and Muslims, being the location where Jesus prayed. Nevertheless, Jerusalem has for far longer been the center of the Jewish world. The city remained in political turmoil for centuries until the rebirth of the State of Israel and its unification under the Jewish State.

In 1949, the Jewish people declared Jerusalem the capital of their new nation. As David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, stated: "there has always been and always will be one capital only—Jerusalem the eternal. Thus it was 3,000 years ago—and thus it will be, we believe, until the end of time." The city has since flourished as the capital of Israel, being a place where all faiths can peacefully worship. While the future of the full city has yet to be decided, it cannot be denied that Jerusalem is the political, cultural, and spiritual center of Israel.

I applaud President Trump's courageous decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and to relocate the U.S. embassy to the city. It is the obvious decision reflecting our strong commitment to the State of Israel and the Jewish people's historical ties to the land. The status quo of Jerusalem's holy sites should be maintained until a lasting peace agreement is decided on by the two sides.

JIM DOODY TRIBUTE

HON. SCOTT R. TIPTON

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Mr. TIPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Jim Doody. Mr. Doody's hard work led to the opening of the Western Slope Vietnam War Memorial Park at the Fruita Visitor Center in Fruita, Colorado. Shortly after his work on the memorial, he went on to serve as a member of the Grand Junction City Council from

2005 to 2009 and as Mayor of Grand Junction for two of those years.

Mr. Doody was compelled to honor the brave men and women that sacrificed so much to fight for this country and wanted to permanently display that appreciation. To celebrate our veterans he worked to create the Western Slope Vietnam War Memorial Park. His dedication to the project was clear when he drove across the United States to pick up a UH-1H 'Huey' helicopter for static display at the memorial, and his work led to the park opening on July 4, 2003.

Mr. Doody continues to work to maintain the memorial to this day. Mr. Doody helps fundraise for continued maintenance needs and has aided in designing the three bronze statues of a mother and father welcoming home their son at the memorial. On top of all this, he ensures that every November 11th there is a ceremony at the memorial where people can gather and recognize veterans.

I was fortunate to attend the ceremony on November 11, 2017. At the ceremony it was evident that Mr. Doody did not create this memorial for the purpose of commendation, but he nonetheless deserves to be recognized for his service to veterans and the community.

Mr. Speaker, just as Mr. Doody pays homage to our men and women that served, it is my honor to pay tribute to him for the work that he does on the Western Slope Vietnam Memorial Park. On behalf of the Third District of Colorado, I would like to thank Mr. Doody for his generous service to his community.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SAVE OUR
COMMUNITIES FROM RISKY
TRAINS ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, in light of recent train derailments across the country and ongoing transportation security threats, I rise to introduce the Save Our Community from Risky Trains Act, which directs the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to find ways to the greatest extent possible to reroute trains that are carrying certain hazardous materials from selected high-threat urban areas, including the District of Columbia. This legislation is needed now more than ever, especially given DOT's recent announcement that it will rescind a requirement that rail tank cars carrying crude oil be outfitted with an advanced braking system designed to prevent derailments.

D derailments of rail cars carrying hazardous materials are a serious concern and should be a priority of Congress. In 2016, 16 cars of a CSX freight train derailed in a dense residential neighborhood of the nation's capital, disrupting Metrorail, passenger rail, and freight rail service and putting families at risk. Among the derailed freight train cars, cars carrying sodium hydroxide, calcium chloride and ethanol—which is flammable and led to a Metrorail shutdown—spilled. The neighborhood was lucky that there were no injuries, but the continuing threat to the safety and security of urban communities is clear.

In 2007, the House passed the Rail and Public Transportation Security Act of 2007, which included my amendment to protect the

District and similar communities nationwide from dangerous hazardous material shipments by mandating that federal regulations and penalties be developed to increase security and safety for the shipment of these materials through high-threat urban areas. My amendment was not included in the final bill signed into law. While freight companies have begun working with DOT to voluntarily reroute the shipment of certain materials that are toxic or poisonous by inhalation, or explosive from these communities, there is no federal law requiring them to reroute the materials.

This bill would require the Secretary of Transportation to issue regulations to require enhanced security measures for shipments of security-sensitive materials. The bill also requires railroad carriers to use the most secure route and storage pattern to avoid moving certain hazardous materials by rail through selected high-threat urban areas. These security sensitive materials include a highway route-controlled quantity of a Class 7 (radioactive) material; more than 25 kilograms of a division 1.1, 1.2, or 1.3 explosive; more than one liter per package of a material poisonous by inhalation; shipment in other than a bulk packaging of 2,268 kilograms gross weight or more of one class of hazardous materials for which placarding of a vehicle, rail car or freight container is required; and select agents or toxins regulated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

High-profile derailments in North Dakota, Virginia, West Virginia, and Canada demonstrate the need for this legislation. Ethanol, which is flammable, still travels through big cities, and even within a few blocks of the U.S. Capitol. This bill will protect our communities from the risk created by trains carrying hazardous materials.

I urge support for this bill.

RECOGNIZING SI SI HAN

HON. ERIC SWALWELL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Mr. SWALWELL of California. Mr. Speaker, along with my colleague, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, I rise to recognize Si Si Han in celebration of her life.

Si Si was born in Burma on November 16, 1971. She came to the United States in 2002 when she married her husband, Ryan Saw. San Lorenzo would eventually become home for Si Si, Ryan, and their 10-year old daughter, Ashly.

Si Si worked for Caltrans for more than 10 years. Members of the Cal Trans team who worked with Si Si closely said that, rain or shine, she always had a smile on her face.

Early in the morning on December 2, 2017, Si Si was collecting tolls on the eastern span of the Bay Bridge. Only a few minutes into her shift, a box truck collided with the toll booth in which Si Si was working, killing her.

Si Si was not scheduled to work that morning, but she was always willing to help out when needed. Si Si tried to work mornings often so that she had more time to spend with her family. Those closest to Si Si said that she worked tirelessly to provide her daughter with the best opportunities available.

Si Si was a dedicated mother, wife, and daughter. She was a valued friend and col-

league among her Caltrans District 4 family as well. One colleague described Si Si as "the light of the bridge."

Today, we stand to honor the memory of Si Si Han. Her generosity and kindness will never be forgotten. We are grateful to have had Si Si as a member of our Bay Area community. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family and friends, and may her warm spirit forever light the bridge she tended.

HONORING THE LIFE OF COL. WELSEY L. FOX, USMC (RET.)

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Col. Wes Fox. Col. Fox enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1950 at the start of the Korean War to begin his 43-year career. Wes served 16 years as a noncommissioned officer before commissioning as a second lieutenant and retiring as a colonel.

Col. Fox valiantly served the nation and became a recipient of the Medal of Honor for his actions in Vietnam. He led his men through heavy fire, even picking up the weapon of a Marine killed in action, to continue fighting the enemy. Col. Fox sustained severe injuries from shrapnel, continued to lead his Marines, and called in air support. After the battle was over, Fox refused medical treatment, set up an supervised a defensive perimeter, and remained until all the Marines were evacuated. According to his Medal of Honor citation, "his indomitable courage, inspiring initiative, and unwavering devotion to duty in the face of grave personal danger inspired his Marines to such aggressive actions that they overcame all enemy resistance and destroyed a large bunker complex." Col. Fox retired from the Marines in 1993 with decorations including the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

After retirement, Col. Fox served as the Deputy Commandant of First Battalion in the Corps of Cadets at Virginia Tech. Col. Fox authored two books: "Marine Rifleman: Forty-Three Years in the Corps (Memories of War)" and "Six Essential Elements of Leadership: Marine Corps Wisdom from a Medal of Honor Recipient." I am honored to have known Wes and to have served as a witness to the countless lives he touched through his selfless service and leadership. He is survived by his wife, Dottie; three daughters; four brothers; four sisters; and nine grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me and countless others as we recognize the many contributions of Colonel Wesley L. Fox.

HONORING MARJORIE DICKINSON, UPON HER RETIREMENT FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CALI- FORNIA, DAVIS (UC DAVIS)

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the distinguished career of Mar-

jorie Dickinson, a tireless advocate for California higher education. Since 1987, Marjorie has served as the Assistant Chancellor for Government and Community Relations for the University of California, Davis. As the first person to be appointed to the position, her impact on shaping the university's Government and Community Relations program cannot be understated.

Marjorie and her team serve to represent UC Davis to local, state, and federal government officials, advocating for the university community on a wide array of issues. Her work has cultivated positive relationships within the local community while also balancing a national perspective, helping UC Davis continue to be a leader in the field of higher education whose impact is truly global.

A product of the University of California system herself, having graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, Marjorie has also served with the California Post-Secondary Education Commission. Her entire career is a testament to her dedication to higher education in our state, and her passion for the University of California is constantly on display.

Marjorie's remarkable tenure is coming to an end, but she is preparing to embark on the next phase of her life: a well-earned retirement. We want to express our sincere gratitude to Marjorie for her three decades of service, and we are joined by the entire UC Davis community in wishing her nothing but the best for the future.

HONORING THE LIFE OF HAROLD "BABE" ERDOS

HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to remember the life of Harold "Babe" Erdos who died on July 21, 2017 after a long battle with cancer. Babe lived in Morristown, Ohio with his wife Sue.

Babe was a third-generation coal miner and a union man. He was a union member for 46 years and United Mine Worker of America member for 43 years with Local Union 1304. After working underground for many years, he joined the staff of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) as a union organizer. In this position, he used his family's stories and experiences to advocate for miners. In 1983, he became actively involved in the political component of UMWA where he worked to influence legislators and to inform miners about legislation that would affect them. Even after retirement, he remained actively involved in the political action of the union. Babe considered this group of miners as a family rather than simply a profession. While Babe is perhaps most known for his work with the coal miners, he also served in the United States Army during the Vietnam War and later in life he was elected Mayor of his hometown of Cadiz, Ohio.

But above all, Babe was a dedicated husband, father, union member, and member of the community. Those who had the pleasure of knowing him spoke of his character and commitment to representing working class people. He is remembered as a man who

never complained and always carried himself with a dignity that defined who he was. He leaves behind an enormous legacy and some big shoes to fill in the union. I extend my deepest sympathies to Babe's family, friends, and Union family. I know he is deeply missed by all.

STOP UNDERRIDES ACT OF 2017

HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Stop Underrides Act, a bipartisan, bicameral bill I introduced earlier today along with my colleague on the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, Rep. DESAULNIER from California, and in the Senate, Senators GILLIBRAND and RUBIO, to prevent deadly truck underride crashes.

An underride crash is when a car slides under the body of a large truck, such as a semi-trailer, during an accident. In these instances, the safety features of passenger vehicles are not able to prevent passenger compartment intrusion and often result in severe or fatal injuries even at low speeds.

Too many lives have been lost or forever altered by these preventable crashes and the time has come for Congress to act.

The Stop Underrides Act does just that—lays out a path to bring an end to these terrible and all too often fatal accidents by requiring all large truck trailers to have front, side, and rear underride guards.

These guards, if installed would have likely prevented the death of Michael Higginbotham, who was killed in an underride crash in Memphis and whose parents, Randy and Laurie Higginbotham, have inspired me to take action on this long overdue issue.

It's simple. This legislation will save lives, it's the right thing to do, and that is the bottom line.

This is common sense legislation and I urge my colleagues to support the passage of the Stop Underrides Act.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, on December 7, 2017 I missed Roll Call vote 671. Had I been present, I would have voted yea.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF STANTON GILDENHORN ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 75TH BIRTHDAY

HON. JAMIE RASKIN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Mr. RASKIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the great contributions that have

been rendered to our country and to my home state of Maryland by my constituent and wonderful friend, Stanton Gildenhorn. I offer these remarks just a few days ahead of Stan's 75th birthday next week.

Stan is a well-known public servant, politico, and television personality in our community. He got his start as the youngest staffer in President John F. Kennedy's White House and later worked for the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

Stan earned a J.D. from the George Washington University School of Law and worked as an attorney in private practice for many years, including in Rockville. He also put his superior legal skills to good use to benefit our community by working at non-profit organizations like the Montgomery County Humane Society and serving as both the Chairman and Counsel for the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee.

A passionate political thinker and strategist, Stan has managed or worked on dozens of campaigns in the last 40 years, at nearly every level of government, and chaired the Montgomery County Charter Review Commission. He was a fixture on national and local television shows for decades, and continues to offer valuable and incisive political commentary today.

I am honored to recognize the important contributions of my constituent, Mr. Stanton Gildenhorn today and hope this chamber will join me in wishing him a happy 75th birthday.

HONORING JACKIE GILLAN, PRESIDENT OF ADVOCATES FOR HIGHWAY AND AUTO SAFETY

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the career of Jackie Gillan, President of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety. Jackie will soon be retiring after nearly 30 years with Advocates.

For decades, Jackie has been at the forefront of transportation safety—in and out of government. Her record of public service is impressive. She served as a staffer at the U.S. Department of Transportation during the Carter Administration and in the U.S. Senate. She has also worked at state transportation agencies in New Jersey, Ohio, and California.

I know Jackie from her post-government career as a champion for consumer safety. She joined Advocates as a board member in 1989. She became Vice President a year later and President in 2011.

Under her leadership, Advocates has worked effectively at the federal and state levels to improve child safety; strengthen laws against impaired driving; require seatbelts, child restraints, and motorcycle helmets; establish teen driver programs; and increase funding for highway and auto safety. In 2002, two-year-old Cameron Gulbransen was killed in a tragic back-over accident. With Jackie's help, I passed a bill in Cameron's memory to require back-up cameras in passenger vehicles. The fight did not stop there though. We fought for years afterward to implement the law until the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration finalized a rule in 2014. Thanks

to Jackie's tireless efforts, back-up cameras are now standard in Model Year 2018 passenger vehicles.

This year, we have been working together to pass the HOT CARS Act, which would help prevent child heatstroke deaths by requiring rear seat reminders. Jackie has been an ally in numerous other efforts as well, from limiting the sale of cars under open recall to ensuring the safe deployment of autonomous vehicles.

Jackie leaves her current role with an impressive legacy of crashes prevented, injuries averted, and lives saved. But I don't expect Jackie to disappear into retirement. As she moves from President to President Emeritus of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, I am confident that she will continue to be a safety champion. And whether they know it or not, everyone on the road today owes a little bit of gratitude to Jackie Gillan.

CYBERSECURITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE SECURITY AGENCY ACT OF 2017

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, December 11, 2017

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of H.R. 3359, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency Act of 2017.

I thank Chairman MCCAUL for introducing this important piece of legislation that addresses the cybersecurity needs of our nation.

H.R. 3359, amends the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to redesignate the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS's) National Protection and Programs Directorate as the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA).

Under its new designation the CISA would be headed by a Director of National Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security, who will be responsible for leading national efforts to protect and enhance the security and resilience of U.S. cybersecurity, emergency communications, and critical infrastructure.

CISA will be composed of DHS components reorganized as: the Cybersecurity Division; the Infrastructure Security Division; and the Emergency Communications Division, which was previously the Office for Emergency Communications.

The agency will also have its own privacy officer to ensure compliance with relevant federal laws.

CISA must carry out DHS's responsibilities concerning chemical facilities antiterrorism standards.

The bill requires DHS to: develop, implement, and continually review a maritime cybersecurity risk assessment model to evaluate current and future cybersecurity risks;

seek input from at least one information sharing and analysis organization representing maritime interests in the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center;

establish voluntary reporting guidelines for maritime-related cybersecurity risks and incidents;

request that the National Maritime Security Advisory Committee report and make recommendations to DHS about methods to enhance cybersecurity and information sharing

among security stakeholders from federal, state, local, and tribal governments; public safety and emergency response agencies; law enforcement and security organizations; maritime industry participants; port owners and operators; and maritime terminal owners and operators; and

ensure that maritime security risk assessments include cybersecurity risks to ports and the maritime border of the United States.

As with other threats that this nation has faced and overcome, we must create the resources and the institutional responses to protect our nation against cyber threats while preserving our liberties and freedoms.

We cannot accomplish this task without the full cooperation and support of the private sector, computing research community and academia.

Earlier this Congress, I introduced H.R. 3202, the Cyber Vulnerability Disclosure Reporting Act, which was passed by the full Homeland Security Committee.

H.R. 3202 requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to submit a report on the policies and procedures developed for coordinating cyber vulnerability disclosures.

The report will include an annex with information on instances in which cyber security vulnerability disclosure policies and procedures were used to disclose details on identified weaknesses in computing systems that or digital devices at risk.

The report will provide information on the degree to which the information provided by DHS was used by industry and other stakeholders.

The reason that I worked to bring this bill before the committee is the problem often referred to as a "Zero Day Event," which describes the situation that network security professionals may find themselves when a previously unknown error in computing code is exploited by a cybercriminal or terrorist.

I am pleased that the Committee on Homeland Security passed H.R. 3202 to address the need to support information sharing regarding threats to computing networks.

I look forward to the Full House consideration of H.R. 3202.

In the first few weeks of this Congress I introduced a number of measures on the topic of cybersecurity to address gaps in our nation's cyber defensive posture:

SCOUTS Act—H.R. 940;

CAPITALS Act—H.R. 54;

SAFETY Act—H.R. 950;

Terrorism Prevention and Critical Infrastructure—H.R. 945; and

Cybersecurity and Federal Workforce Enhancement Act—H.R. 935.

H.R. 940, the "Securing Communications of Utilities from Terrorist Threats" or the "SCOUTS Act," directs the Secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the sector-specific agencies, to work with critical infrastructure owners and operators and State, local, tribal, and territorial entities to seek voluntary participation on ways that DHS can best defend against and recover from terrorist attacks that could have a debilitating impact on national security, economic stability, public health and safety, or any combination thereof.

H.R. 940, is relevant to today's hearing because it addresses the need for a two way communication process that enables private sector participants in information sharing arrangements with DHS to communicate their views on the effectiveness of the information provided; the method of information sharing; and their particular needs as time passes.

Specifically the bill establishes voluntary listening opportunities for sector specific entities to communicate their challenges regarding cybersecurity, including what needs they may have for critical infrastructure protection; and how DHS is helping or not helping to meet those needs.

The Society of Maintenance and Reliability Professionals have endorsed H.R. 940, and input on the legislation included the Edison Electric Institute, an electric utility association.

H.R. 54, the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity Asset Protection of Infrastructure under Terrorist Attack Logistical Structure or CAPITALS Act, which directs the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to produce a report to Congress regarding the feasibility of establishing a DHS Civilian Cyber Defense National Resource.

H.R. 950, requires a report and assessment regarding Department of Homeland Security's response to terrorist threats to Federal elections. The Comptroller General of the United States is directed to conduct an assessment of the effectiveness of Department of Homeland Security actions to protect election systems from cyber-attacks and to make recommendations for improvements to the actions taken by DHS if determined appropriate.

H.R. 935, The "Cybersecurity and Federal Workforce Enhancement Act" identifies and

trains people already in the workforce who can obtain the skills to address our nation's deficit in the number of workers and positions available for those with needed skills.

H.R. 940, the "Securing Communications of Utilities from Terrorist Threats" or the "SCOUTS Act," is the relevant to today's hearing because this bill focuses on the communications sent by DHS to sector specific entities and the ability of these entities to communicate to the agencies their perspective on the usefulness of the information; the form of communication that would be most helpful; and requires a report to Congress by DHS on the views of critical infrastructure owners and operators on the information sharing process related to cybersecurity.

Each of these bills will build upon an aggressive approach for securing cyber technology to manage critical infrastructure, chemical facilities, and port operations, ranging from communication and navigation to engineering, safety, and pipelines, that are critical to protect our nation's interest.

Over the past year, Russian actors' targeted U.S. election infrastructure, hackers escalated efforts to breach the domestic energy sector, and WannaCry and NotPetya ransomware wreaked havoc on public and private infrastructure around the world.

According to Symantec, a leading provider of cybersecurity solutions, said that "The world of cyber espionage experienced a notable shift towards more overt activity, designed to destabilize and disrupt targeted organizations and countries."

As cyber threats continue to evolve and become more sophisticated, so must U.S. efforts to confront them.

The Department of Homeland Security, through the National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD), plays a central role in the federal government's cybersecurity apparatus and in coordinating federal efforts to secure critical infrastructure.

DHS is charged with coordinating agency efforts to secure the (.gov) Domain, while also serving as the hub for cybersecurity information sharing between and among the private sector and federal government.

It is my hope that as this Congress moves forward that we will seek out the best ways to bring the brightest and most qualified people into the government as cybersecurity professionals.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S7949–S7978

Measures Introduced: Six bills and two resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2217–2222, and S. Res. 357–358. **Pages S7974–75**

Measures Passed:

Justice for Uncompensated Survivors Today (JUST) Act: Senate passed S. 447, to require reporting on acts of certain foreign countries on Holocaust era assets and related issues, after agreeing to the committee amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Page S7950**

International education and exchange programs: Senate agreed to S. Res. 357, expressing the sense of the Senate that international education and exchange programs further United States national security and foreign policy priorities, enhance United States economic competitiveness, and promote mutual understanding and cooperation among nations. **Page S7978**

National Phenylketonuria Awareness Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 358, designating December 3, 2017, as “National Phenylketonuria Awareness Day”. **Page S7978**

Willett Nomination—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of the nomination of Don R. Willett, of Texas, to be a Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, post-cloture. **Pages S7965–72**

During consideration of this nomination today, Senate also took the following action:

By 50 yeas to 48 nays (Vote No. 314), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Page S7965**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination, post-cloture, at approximately 12 noon, on Wednesday, December 13, 2017; and that all time during recess, adjournment, morning business, and Leader remarks count post-cloture on the nomination. **Page S7978**

Nominations Confirmed: Senate confirmed the following nominations:

By 50 yeas to 48 nays (Vote No. EX. 313), Leonard Steven Grasz, of Nebraska, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit. **Pages S7950–58, S7958–65, S7978**

Mary Kirtley Waters, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Legislative Affairs). **Pages S7972, S7978**

Messages from the House: **Page S7974**

Measures Referred: **Page S7974**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Page S7974**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S7975–76**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S7976–77**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Pages S7977–78**

Record Votes: Two record votes were taken today. (Total—314) **Page S7965**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:03 p.m., until 12 noon on Wednesday, December 13, 2017. (For Senate’s program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today’s Record on page S7978.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

MACHINE LEARNING AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet concluded a hearing to examine digital decision-making, focusing on the building blocks of machine learning and artificial intelligence, after receiving testimony from Cindy L. Bethel, Mississippi State University, Starkville; Daniel Castro, Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, Victoria Espinel, BSA, The Software Alliance, and Dario Gil, AI and IBM Q, all of Washington, D.C.; and Edward W. Felten, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey.

NATIONAL OCEAN POLICY

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard concluded a hearing to examine national ocean policy, focusing on stakeholder perspectives, after receiving testimony from Bonnie Brady, Long Island Commercial Fishing Association, Montauk, New York; Christopher Guith, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Global Energy Institute, and Kathy Metcalf, Chamber of Shipping of America, both of Washington, D.C.; and Dan Keppen, Family Farm Alliance, Klamath Falls, Oregon.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of Linda Capuano, of Texas, to be Administrator of the Energy Information Administration, Department of Energy, and Timothy R. Petty, of Indiana, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior.

**ENERGY AND RESOURCE
INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS**

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine the permitting processes at the Department of the Interior and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for energy and resource infrastructure projects and opportunities to improve the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of federal decisions for such projects, after receiving testimony from James Cason, Associate Deputy Secretary of the Interior; Janet Pfleeger, Acting Executive Director, Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council; Terry L. Turpin, Director, Office of Energy Projects, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; Chad Brown, Washington Department of Ecology Water Quality Unit Supervisor, Olympia; Roxane Perruso, The Anschutz Corporation, Denver, Colorado; and Luke Russell, Hecla Mining Company, Hayden, Idaho.

EUROPEAN ENERGY SECURITY

Committee on Foreign Relations: Subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation concluded a hearing to examine European energy security, focusing on United States interests and coercive Russian diplomacy, after receiving testimony from A. Wess Mitchell, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, and John E. McCarrick, Deputy

Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Energy Resources, both of the Department of State.

THE FUTURE OF ZIMBABWE

Committee on Foreign Relations: Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health Policy concluded a hearing to examine the future of Zimbabwe, after receiving testimony from Stephanie Sullivan, Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Africa; Tendai Biti, MDC Alliance, Harare, Zimbabwe; Dewa Mavhinga, Human Rights Watch, Johannesburg, South Africa; and Peter Godwin, New York, New York.

THE COST OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the cost of prescription drugs, focusing on an examination of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine report “Making Medicines Affordable: A National Imperative”, after receiving testimony from Norman R. Augustine, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, and Douglas Holtz-Eakin, American Action Forum, both of Washington, D.C.; and David E. Mitchell, Patients For Affordable Drugs, Bethesda, Maryland.

**ENSURING PATIENT ACCESS AND
EFFECTIVE DRUG ENFORCEMENT ACT
OVERSIGHT**

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine the Ensuring Patient Access and Effective Drug Enforcement Act, after receiving testimony from Demetra Ashley, Acting Assistant Administrator, Diversion Control Division, Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Justice; Brian E. Frosh, Attorney General of Maryland, Baltimore; Jan Favero Chambers, National Fibromyalgia and Chronic Pain Association, Logan, Utah; Carmen Catizone, National Association of Boards of Pharmacy, Mount Prospect, Illinois; and John M. Gray, Healthcare Distribution Alliance, Arlington, Virginia.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing on certain intelligence matters from officials of the intelligence community.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 18 public bills, H.R. 4616–4633; 1 private bill, H.R. 4634; and 6 resolutions, H. Res. 656–661, were introduced.

Page H9844–45

Additional Cosponsors:

Page H9846

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 2872, to amend the Federal Power Act to promote hydropower development at existing non-powered dams, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–461, Part 1);

H. Res. 657, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2396) to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to update the exception for certain annual notices provided by financial institutions, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4015) to improve the quality of proxy advisory firms for the protection of investors and the U.S. economy, and in the public interest, by fostering accountability, transparency, responsiveness, and competition in the proxy advisory firm industry (H. Rept. 115–462); and

H. Res. 658, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1638) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees on the estimated total assets under direct or indirect control by certain senior Iranian leaders and other figures, and for other purposes, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4324) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to make certifications with respect to United States and foreign financial institutions' aircraft-related transactions involving Iran, and, for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–463).

Page H9844

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Marshall to act as Speaker pro tempore for today.

Page H9791

Recess: The House recessed at 10:53 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon.

Page H9797

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Directing the Secretary of Energy to review and update a report on the energy and environmental benefits of the re-refining of used lubricating oil: H.R. 1733, to direct the Secretary of Energy to review and update a report on the energy and environmental benefits of the re-refining of used lubricating oil;

Pages H9808–09

Promoting Hydropower Development at Existing Nonpowered Dams Act: H.R. 2872, amended, to

amend the Federal Power Act to promote hydropower development at existing nonpowered dams;

Pages H9809–12

Promoting Closed-Loop Pumped Storage Hydropower Act: H.R. 2880, amended, to amend the Federal Power Act to promote closed-loop pumped storage hydropower;

Pages H9812–14

Amending title 5, United States Code, to extend the authority to conduct telework travel expenses test programs: H.R. 4171, amended, to amend title 5, United States Code, to extend the authority to conduct telework travel expenses test programs;

Pages H9814–15

Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 9155 Schaefer Road, Converse, Texas, as the "Converse Veterans Post Office Building": H.R. 1208, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 9155 Schaefer Road, Converse, Texas, as the "Converse Veterans Post Office Building";

Pages H9815–16

Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1100 Kings Road in Jacksonville, Florida, as the "Rutledge Pearson Post Office Building": H.R. 3638, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1100 Kings Road in Jacksonville, Florida, as the "Rutledge Pearson Post Office Building";

Pages H9818

Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1300 Main Street in Belmar, New Jersey, as the "Dr. Walter S. McAfee Post Office Building": H.R. 3655, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1300 Main Street in Belmar, New Jersey, as the "Dr. Walter S. McAfee Post Office Building";

Pages H9819–20

Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 123 Bridgeton Pike in Mullica Hill, New Jersey, as the "James C. 'Billy' Johnson Post Office Building": H.R. 4285, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 123 Bridgeton Pike in Mullica Hill, New Jersey, as the "James C. 'Billy' Johnson Post Office Building";

Pages H9820–21

Condemning the persecution of Christians around the world: H. Res. 407, amended, condemning the persecution of Christians around the world;

Pages H9821–24

Reaffirming a strong commitment to the United States-Mexico partnership: H. Res. 336, reaffirming

a strong commitment to the United States-Mexico partnership; and **Pages H9824–26**

Reaffirming the strategic partnership between the United States and Canada, recognizing bilateral cooperation that advances United States national interests, and urging increased bilateral cooperation on security, economic issues, and energy: H. Res. 357, amended, reaffirming the strategic partnership between the United States and Canada, recognizing bilateral cooperation that advances United States national interests, and urging increased bilateral cooperation on security, economic issues, and energy. **Page H9826–28**

United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission—Reappointment: Read a letter from Representative Pelosi, Minority Leader, in which she reappointed the following individuals to the United States-China Economic and Security Review Commission, effective January 1, 2018: Ms. Carolyn Bartholomew of Washington, D.C. and Mr. Michael R. Wessel of Falls Church, Virginia. **Page H9828**

Recess: The House recessed at 4:08 p.m. and reconvened at 4:34 p.m. **Page H9828**

Community Institution Mortgage Relief Act of 2017: The House passed H.R. 3971, to amend the Truth in Lending Act and the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974 to modify the requirements for community financial institutions with respect to certain rules relating to mortgage loans, by a yeas-and-nays vote of 294 yeas to 129 nays, Roll No. 675. **Pages H9799–H9808, H9829–30**

Rejected the Titus motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Financial Services with instructions to report the same back to the House forthwith with an amendment, by a yeas-and-nays vote of 190 yeas to 233 nays, Roll No. 674. **Pages H9807–08, H9828–29**

Pursuant to the Rule, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–44 shall be considered as adopted. **Page H9799**

Agreed to:

Sherman amendment (No. 1 printed in part B of H. Rept. 115–443) that lowers the amount of consolidated assets of a creditor eligible for the safe harbor from escrow requirements in the bill from \$25,000,000,000 or less to \$10,000,000,000 or less; lowers the number of loans that a mortgage servicer eligible for exemptions and adjustments from the Bureau can service annually from 30,000 or fewer mortgage loans to 20,000 or fewer mortgage loans. **Page H9806**

H. Res. 647, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 477) and (H.R. 3971) and the

joint resolution (H.J. Res. 123) was agreed to Thursday, December 7th.

Suspensions—Proceedings Postponed: The House debated the following measures under suspension of the rules. Further proceedings were postponed.

Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 30 East Somerset Street in Raritan, New Jersey, as the “Sergeant John Basilone Post Office”: H.R. 2815, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 30 East Somerset Street in Raritan, New Jersey, as the “Sergeant John Basilone Post Office”; and **Pages H9816–18**

Designating the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1415 West Oak Street, in Kissimmee, Florida, as the “Borinqueneers Post Office Building”: H.R. 4042, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1415 West Oak Street, in Kissimmee, Florida, as the “Borinqueneers Post Office Building”. **Pages H9818–19**

Senate Referral: S. 447 was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs. **Page H9843**

Senate Message: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today appears on page H9799.

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yeas-and-nays votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H9828–29 and H9829–30. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Committee Meetings

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Full Committee began a markup on H.R. 4508, the “Promoting Real Opportunity, Success, and Prosperity through Education Reform Act”.

UPDATE ON THE CORPORATE AVERAGE FUEL ECONOMY PROGRAM (CAFE) AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS STANDARDS FOR MOTOR VEHICLES

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Environment; and Subcommittee on Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection held a joint hearing entitled “Update on the Corporate Average Fuel Economy Program (CAFE) and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Standards for Motor Vehicles”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

EXAMINING CONCERNS OF PATIENT BROKERING AND ADDICTION TREATMENT FRAUD

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled “Examining Concerns of Patient Brokering and Addiction Treatment Fraud”. Testimony was heard from Dave Aronberg, State Attorney, 15th Judicial Circuit, Florida; Eric M. Gold, Assistant Attorney General and Chief, Health Care Division, Office of the Massachusetts Attorney General; Alan S. Johnson, Chief Assistant State Attorney, 15th Judicial Circuit, Florida; and public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Financial Services: Full Committee began a markup on H.R. 435, the “Credit Access and Inclusion Act of 2017”; H.R. 1457, the “Making Online Banking Initiation Legal and Easy Act of 2017”; H.R. 2219, the “End Banking for Human Traffickers Act of 2017”; H.R. 2319, the “Consumer Financial Choice and Capital Markets Protection Act of 2017”; H.R. 2948, to amend the S.A.F.E. Mortgage Licensing Act of 2008 to provide a temporary license for loan originators transitioning between employers, and for other purposes; H.R. 3179, the “Transparency and Accountability for Business Standards Act”; H.R. 3864, the “Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Reauthorization Act of 2017”; H.R. 4464, the “Common Sense Credit Union Capital Relief Act of 2017”; H.R. 4519, to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to repeal certain disclosure requirements related to resource extraction, and for other purposes; H.R. 4529, the “Accelerating Access to Capital Act of 2017”; H.R. 4537, the “International Insurance Standards Act of 2017”; H.R. 4545, the “Financial Institutions Examination Fairness and Reform Act”; H.R. 4546, the “National Securities Exchange Regulatory Parity Act”; H.R. 4560, the “GSE Jumpstart Reauthorization Act of 2017”; and H.R. 4566, the “Alleviating Stress Test Burdens to Help Investors Act”.

PROTECTING NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations held a hearing entitled “Protecting North Korean Refugees”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

THE FUTURE OF THE NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade held a hearing entitled “The Future of the North American Free

Trade Agreement”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

CAMBODIA’S DESCENT: POLICIES TO SUPPORT DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific held a hearing entitled “Cambodia’s Descent: Policies to Support Democracy and Human Rights”. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on the Judiciary: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 1865, the “Allow States and Victims to Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act of 2017”; and H.R. 2595, the “Strengthening the Department of Homeland Security Secure Mail Initiative Act”. H.R. 1865 was ordered reported, as amended. H.R. 2595 was ordered reported, without amendment.

EXAMINING CONSEQUENCES OF AMERICA’S GROWING DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN MINERALS

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing entitled “Examining Consequences of America’s Growing Dependence on Foreign Minerals”. Testimony was heard from Ronnie Favors, Administrator, Defense Logistics Agency Strategic Materials, Department of Defense; Murray Hitzman, Associate Director for Energy and Minerals, U.S. Geological Survey, Department of the Interior; and public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Full Committee began a markup on H.R. 200, the “Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act”; H.R. 1157, to clarify the United States interest in certain submerged lands in the area of the Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge, and for other purposes; H.R. 1349, to amend the Wilderness Act to ensure that the use of bicycles, wheelchairs, strollers, and game carts is not prohibited in Wilderness Areas, and for other purposes; H.R. 1350, to modify the boundary of Voyageurs National Park in the State of Minnesota, and for other purposes; H.R. 1675, the “National Landslide Preparedness Act”; H.R. 2888, the “Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park Establishment Act”; H.R. 3400, the “Recreation Not Red-Tape Act”; H.R. 3588, the “RED SNAPPER Act”; H.R. 4033, the “National Geologic Mapping Act Reauthorization Act”; H.R. 4264, the “Hyde Park Land Conveyance Act”; H.R. 4266, the “Acadia National Park Boundary Clarification Act”;

H.R. 4465, the “Endangered Fish Recovery Programs Extension Act of 2017”; H.R. 4475, the “National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring System Act”; H.R. 4568, the “Enhancing Geothermal Production on Federal Lands Act”; S. 825, the “Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium Land Transfer Act of 2017”; and S. 1285, the “Oregon Tribal Economic Development Act”.

**IRANIAN LEADERSHIP ASSET
TRANSPARENCY ACT; PRIVACY
NOTIFICATION TECHNICAL
CLARIFICATION ACT; CORPORATE
GOVERNANCE REFORM AND
TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2017;
STRENGTHENING OVERSIGHT OF IRAN'S
ACCESS TO FINANCE ACT**

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 1638, the “Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act”; H.R. 2396, the “Privacy Notification Technical Clarification Act”; H.R. 4015, the “Corporate Governance Reform and Transparency Act of 2017”; and H.R. 4324, the “Strengthening Oversight of Iran’s Access to Finance Act”. The Committee granted, by record vote of 8–4, a structured rule for H.R. 1638. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule makes in order as original text for the purpose of amendment an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–47 and provides that it shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute. The rule makes in order only those further amendments printed in part A of the Rules Committee report. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule waives all points of order against the amendment printed in part A of the report. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. In section 2, the rule provides for consideration of H.R. 4324 under a structured rule. The rule provides one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that an amendment in the na-

ture of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–48 shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute. The rule makes in order only the further amendment printed in part B of the Rules Committee report, if offered by the Member designated in the report, which shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule waives all points of order against the amendment printed in part B of the report. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. The Committee granted, by record vote of 8–4, a structured rule for H.R. 2396. The rule provides one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Financial Services now printed in the bill shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended. The rule makes in order only the further amendment printed in the Rules Committee report, if offered by the Member designated in the report, which shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule waives all points of order against the amendment printed in the report. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. In section 2, the rule provides for consideration of H.R. 4015 under a closed rule. The rule provides one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–46 shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. Testimony was heard from Representatives Barr and Heck of Washington.

THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC IN APPALACHIA: ADDRESSING HURDLES TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management held a hearing entitled “The Opioid Epidemic in Appalachia: Addressing Hurdles to Economic Development in the Region”. Testimony was heard from Representative Rogers of Kentucky; Earl Gohl, Federal Co-Chair, Appalachian Regional Commission; and public witnesses.

AN UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FOREVER GI BILL, THE HARRY W. COLMERY EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2017

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity held a hearing entitled “An Update on the Implementation of the Forever GI Bill, the Harry W. Colmery Educational Assistance Act of 2017”. Testimony was heard from Major General Robert M. Worley II, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), Director, Education Service, Veterans Benefit Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs; and public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: to hold hearings to examine safeguarding American agriculture in a globalized world, 9:30 a.m., SR-328A.

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, to receive a closed briefing on Department of Defense global counterterrorism operations, 10 a.m., SVC-217.

Subcommittee on Personnel, to hold hearings to examine an update on research, diagnosis, and treatment for traumatic brain injury/concussion in servicemembers, 10 a.m., SR-222.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: business meeting to consider S. 2202, to amend title 49, United States Code, to authorize appropriations for the National Transportation Safety Board, S. 2200, to reauthorize the National Integrated Drought Information System, S. 1768, to reauthorize and amend the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program, the nomination of Barry Lee Myers, of Pennsylvania, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, and a routine list in the Coast Guard, 10 a.m., SH-216.

Committee on Environment and Public Works: business meeting to consider the nomination of R. D. James, of Missouri, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Army, Department of Defense, 9:50 a.m., SD-406.

Full Committee, to hold an oversight hearing to examine the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, 10 a.m., SD-406.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine using force, focusing on strategic, political, and legal considerations, 9:30 a.m., SD-419.

Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine the extradition Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Kosovo, signed at Pristina on March 29, 2016 (Treaty Doc.115-02), the extradition Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of Serbia, signed at Belgrade on August 15, 2016 (Treaty Doc.115-01), the Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Kiribati on the Delimitation of Maritime Boundaries, signed at Majuro on September 6, 2013, and the Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia on the Delimitation of a Maritime Boundary, signed at Koror on August 1, 2014 (Treaty Doc.114-13), and the United Nations Convention on the Assignment of Receivables in International Trade, done at New York on December 12, 2001, and signed by the United States on December 30, 2003 (Treaty Doc.114-07), 2:30 p.m., SD-419.

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: business meeting to consider the nominations of Johnny Collett, of Kentucky, to be Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Mitchell Zais, of South Carolina, to be Deputy Secretary, and James Blew, of California, to be Assistant Secretary for Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development, all of the Department of Education, William Beach, of Kansas, to be Commissioner of Labor Statistics, Kate S. O'Scannlain, of Maryland, to be Solicitor, and Scott A. Mugno, of Pennsylvania, and Preston Rutledge, of the District of Columbia, both to be an Assistant Secretary, all of the Department of Labor, and other pending nominations, Time to be announced, Room to be announced.

Full Committee, to hold hearings to examine implementation of the 21st Century Cures Act, focusing on responding to mental health needs, 10 a.m., SD-430.

Committee on the Judiciary: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Elizabeth L. Branch, of Georgia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit, R. Stan Baker, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Georgia, Charles Barnes Goodwin, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma, Matthew J. Kacsmayk, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Texas, Matthew Spencer Petersen, of Virginia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia, and Eli Jeremy Richardson, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Tennessee, 10 a.m., SD-226.

Subcommittee on Antitrust, Competition Policy and Consumer Rights, to hold hearings to examine the consumer welfare standard in antitrust, 2:30 p.m., SD-226.

House

Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces, hearing entitled “Addressing Physiological Episodes in Fighter, Attack, and Training Aircraft”, 3:30 p.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, Full Committee, continue markup on H.R. 4508, the “Promoting Real Opportunity, Success, and Prosperity through Education Reform Act”, 2175 Rayburn. Time to be announced.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled “Examining the Drug Supply Chain”, 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Energy, hearing entitled “The Impacts and Future of North American Energy Trade”, 10:15 a.m., 2322 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Full Committee, continue markup on H.R. 435, the “Credit Access and Inclusion Act of 2017”; H.R. 1457, the “Making Online Banking Initiation Legal and Easy Act of 2017”; H.R. 2219, the “End Banking for Human Traffickers Act of 2017”; H.R. 2319, the “Consumer Financial Choice and Capital Markets Protection Act of 2017”; H.R. 2948, to amend the S.A.F.E. Mortgage Licensing Act of 2008 to provide a temporary license for loan originators transitioning between employers, and for other purposes; H.R. 3179, the “Transparency and Accountability for Business Standards Act”; H.R. 3864, the “Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Reauthorization Act of 2017”; H.R. 4464, the “Common Sense Credit Union Capital Relief Act of 2017”; H.R. 4519, to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to repeal certain disclosure requirements related to resource extraction, and for other purposes; H.R. 4529, the “Accelerating Access to Capital Act of 2017”; H.R. 4537, the “International Insurance Standards Act of 2017”; H.R. 4545, the “Financial Institutions Examination Fairness and Reform Act”; H.R. 4546, the “National Securities Exchange Regulatory Parity Act”; H.R. 4560, the “GSE Jumpstart Reauthorization Act of 2017”; and H.R. 4566, the “Alleviating Stress Test Burdens to Help Investors Act”, 9 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Homeland Security, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 1486, the “Securing American Non-Profit Organizations Against Terrorism Act of 2017”; H.R. 4433, the “Securing Department of Homeland Security Firearms Act of 2017”; H.R. 4553, the “Terrorist Screening and Targeting Review Act of 2017”; H.R. 4555, the “DHS Interagency Counterterrorism Task Force Act of 2017”; H.R. 4559, the “Global Aviation System Security Reform Act of 2017”; H.R. 4561, the “Security Assessment Feasibility for Equipment Testing and Evaluation of Capabilities for our Homeland Act”; H.R. 4564, the “Post-Caliphate Threat Assessment Act of 2017”; H.R. 4567, the “DHS Overseas Personnel Enhancement Act of 2017”; H.R. 4569, the “Counterterrorism Information Sharing Improvement Act of 2017”; H.R. 4577, the “Domestic Explosives Detection Canine Capacity Building Act of 2017”; H.R. 4578, the “Counter Terrorist Network Act”; and H.R. 4581, the “Screening and Vet-

ting Passenger Exchange Act of 2017”, 9:30 a.m., HVC-210.

Committee on House Administration, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 4009, to authorize the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution to plan, design, and construct a central parking facility on National Zoological Park property in the District of Columbia; and a committee resolution updating the advertisement regulations found in the Members’ Congressional Handbook, 11:30 a.m., 1310 Longworth.

Committee on the Judiciary, Full Committee, hearing entitled “Oversight Hearing with Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein”, 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Full Committee, continue markup on H.R. 200, the “Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act”; H.R. 1157, to clarify the United States interest in certain submerged lands in the area of the Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge, and for other purposes; H.R. 1349, to amend the Wilderness Act to ensure that the use of bicycles, wheelchairs, strollers, and game carts is not prohibited in Wilderness Areas, and for other purposes; H.R. 1350, to modify the boundary of Voyageurs National Park in the State of Minnesota, and for other purposes; H.R. 1675, the “National Landslide Preparedness Act”; H.R. 2888, the “Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park Establishment Act”; H.R. 3400, the “Recreation Not Red-Tape Act”; H.R. 3588, the “RED SNAPPER Act”; H.R. 4033, the “National Geologic Mapping Act Reauthorization Act”; H.R. 4264, the “Hyde Park Land Conveyance Act”; H.R. 4266, the “Acadia National Park Boundary Clarification Act”; H.R. 4465, the “Endangered Fish Recovery Programs Extension Act of 2017”; H.R. 4475, the “National Volcano Early Warning and Monitoring System Act”; H.R. 4568, the “Enhancing Geothermal Production on Federal Lands Act”; S. 825, the “Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium Land Transfer Act of 2017”; and S. 1285, the “Oregon Tribal Economic Development Act”, 12:30 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Full Committee, hearing entitled, “Oversight of the Bureau of Prisons and Inmate Reentry”, 10 a.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Research and Technology, hearing entitled “Head Health Challenge: Preventing Head Trauma from Football Field to Shop Floor to Battlefield”, 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Energy, hearing entitled “Advancing Solar Energy Technology: Research Trumps Deployment”, 2 p.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, hearing entitled “Pre-Discharge Claims Programs: Are VA and DOD Effectively Serving Separating Military Personnel?”, 10 a.m., 334 Cannon.

Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Oversight, hearing entitled “IRS Reform: The Taxpayer’s Experience”, 10 a.m., 1100 Longworth.

Joint Meetings

Senate Committee on Finance, meeting of conferees on H.R. 1, to provide for reconciliation pursuant to titles II

and V of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2018, 2 p.m., HC-5, Capitol

Next Meeting of the SENATE

12 noon, Wednesday, December 13

Senate Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of Don R. Willett, of Texas, to be a Circuit Judge, United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, post-cloture.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Wednesday, December 13

House Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Consideration of H.R. 1638—Iranian Leadership Asset Transparency Act (Subject to a Rule) and H.R. 4324—Strengthening Oversight of Iran's Access to Finance Act (Subject to a Rule). The House is also expected to begin consideration of H.R. 2396—Privacy Notification Technical Clarification Act (Subject to a Rule) and H.R. 4015—Corporate Governance Reform and Transparency Act of 2017 (Subject to a Rule).

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